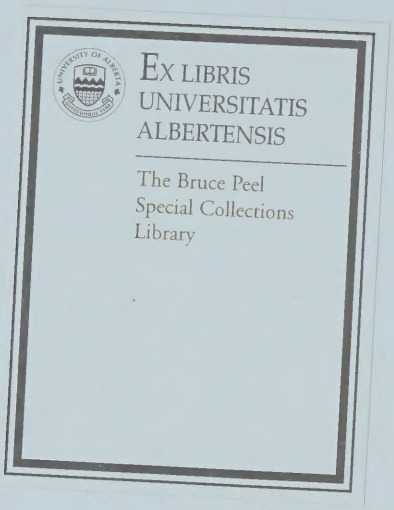
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A Critical Conversation With Curriculum Development: An Interpretive Inquiry into the Early Stage of the WCP Social Studies Project

by

J. Paul Stewart

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Department of Elementary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

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University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **A Critical Conversation With Curriculum Development: An Interpretive Inquiry into the Early Stage of the WCP Social Studies Project** submitted by J. Paul Stewart in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Abstract

This research is an interpretive inquiry that focuses on how people recollected and reflected on their experiences with the Western Canada Protocol (WCP) social studies *Foundation Document* (April 1999 draft) and involvement at a focus group forum. As such, this work is an attempt to critically engage with an early and important component of a curriculum development process concerned with cultural pluralism and involving a wide range of stakeholders.

Thirteen people participated in interviews; six were male and seven were female. They included: university professors, an employee of Alberta Learning, school-based administrators, district curriculum advisors, teachers in the classroom, an employee of a non-profit educational foundation, and a graduate student. This group of participants included two Francophone and two Aboriginal people.

Transcripts were analyzed to identify themes, topics or issues within participants' responses to the process, the document, and the focus group experience. An interpretive account, in the form of a narrative analysis, was written to provide a holistic report on the findings of this study. The findings and discussion underscore both the complexity and importance of a broad based involvement in the development of curricula that support cultural pluralism.

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CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ANECDOTE

Finding My Purpose

This study was my personal attempt to engage with an early component of a curriculum development and implementation process. I wanted to come to an understanding of how the curriculum provided to schools comes to be what it is. I proposed to conduct a discourse analysis of the initial draft of the Western Canada Protocol (WCP, 1999) social studies curriculum *Foundation Document*. Part of the research included interviewing a number of people who had been involved in this curriculum development process. By listening to their perspectives and responses to the *Foundation Document* and focus group, I hoped to have a wider understanding of the curriculum implementation process and be able to discern a broader range of meanings of the text of the *Foundation Document*.

When I began my research I sought out a variety of people who had some involvement in this social studies curriculum project. I interviewed people from different teaching communities who had different levels of involvement. The more people I engaged in conversation, the more I came to realize that the whole story was not in the discourse of the initial draft of the *Foundation Document*. My interest was in the larger story of people's understanding of the document, the whole curriculum development process, and their personal perception of the role of social studies.

There was no core or universal understanding of the *Foundation Document* and the focus group sessions. The people I interviewed read the same document, during the same time period, and attended focus groups run in the same manner. Of the 13 people I

interviewed, I had 13 different understandings of the WCP social studies curriculum development process. For the people with whom I talked, the understanding of curriculum development and implementation is the bridge between the abstract experience of written curriculum and their concrete experiences in classroom and school settings (Aoki, 1987).

The different understandings caused me to reconsider my original purpose. Listening to different interpretations of the *Foundation Document* and focus group sessions brought a wide spectrum of views to my understanding. It was exciting to share in experiences of a situation in which I had also participated. There is a multivocality in the curriculum development field. The polyphony of voices I experienced during my interviews rang loudly and influenced my understanding. My focus evolved from the static written document to a wonderfully alive conversation of the whole process. Much like many times in my life, my purpose was gently refocused, and I was led down a slightly different but parallel path.

My Formative Years

My early years were a nonpolitical, blissful experience. I grew up in a White, working-class community. Most of the surrounding communities were sustained by wood and mining related businesses. From my recollection, until I reached high school graduation, the number of visible-minority families could be counted on one hand. However, as a White, English (only) speaking Anglophone, I was in the minority. The majority group consisted of a Doukhobor population that worked hard to maintain its culture. A second large group was a Portuguese population that also was working against assimilation. There were no significant French-Canadian or First Nations groups in the

area. To me, these other minority groups were something for textbooks, the big city, and American television.

In my community we all attended the same schools, played on the same teams, and shopped at the same stores. The curriculum was the same for all students, and we were all taught the same. People of my generation all spoke English, but it was the first or only language for just a small group of us. Many of the grandparents of my peers spoke very little English and maintained "old world" customs. The Portuguese children learned their language and customs strictly through their home. The Russian children had "Russian School" on Saturday mornings at a local elementary school. I learned a few words of Russian and Portuguese to enable me to be of more assistance at the grocery store where I held a part-time job. We had friendly rivalries at school but banded together when our teams played against an out-of-town team and in community activities.

After high school graduation my eyes were slowly opened. Many friends and acquaintances were marrying within their cultural group, a few visible and other minority culture families were moving to town, there were a few small communities "up the valley" that frowned upon our visitations, and there were members of the opposite sex that you could not drive home after an evening out because their parents did not approve of their being out with people not from their culture. Young adults my age were shedding their adolescent rebellions and starting to conform to their parents' wishes. As I gained an awareness and shared this around the dinner table, my mother would start sharing her experiences nursing Doukhobor and "Freedomite" Russian people and the occasional tensions at the local hospital. Even as I was slowly losing my childhood innocence and becoming reluctantly politically aware, I still had not experienced First Nations culture

and reserves. My university life (living in campus residence) reinforced my narrow view of one young vibrant community with a similar view. The foreign student contingent was generally regarded with stereotypical characteristics born of ignorance. Eventually, I graduated and took a job that changed my understanding of life and different cultures.

Opening My Eyes

I accepted a job teaching in a community located near a reserve. Although there was a K-9 Band school on the reserve, 20% of the K-12 school population where I worked were First Nations students. We had no First Nations teachers and only one First Nations teacher assistant. My teaching assignment included counselling, special education, junior high social studies, and an all-First Nations student option class. When I met the person I was replacing, he said something that I did not clearly understand. I did not know why he said it or the reasons behind his actions. He said, "You will never change them. I tried and couldn't do it. It is in their blood and culture." I was not familiar with any First Nations people, and my initial thoughts were that relating to them and teaching them would be no different than relating to the Russian and Portuguese people and the cultures with which I grew up.

As a teacher in my first classroom posting, and in subsequent schools, I observed that in all core courses all the children were taught the same curriculum. First Nations students and other minorities were taught the same provincially mandated curriculum in the same way with the same expected outcomes. Alladin (1996) summarized Freire's belief that the education system is designed to "perpetuate the dominant/subservient relationship of the oppressor and oppressed" (p. 27). In all but one class, the First Nations students were treated and taught like the majority White students. Initially. I thought this

pedagogically sound and continued this practice "by the dominant society to compliment the racist objectives of assimilation and acculturation of the Native people" (Alladin, p. 25). Any parents or students who viewed this education as a "debilitating force against their growth as citizens" (Bouvier, 1991, p. 293) were hidden and dealt with by the principal. I did my job, taught my courses, and followed the expected culture of the school. I developed a special relationship with many of the First Nations students who were in my core social studies course because they were also in my First Nations-only class. Although this class did not attempt to teach or construct a specific cultural identity, we did activities of the students' choosing. The students were not expected to meet social and academic expectations of the dominant educational system.

This class allowed me to experience an alternate knowledge to teach. As long as I kept the students busy, I was given free rein. We participated in traditional First Nations types of activities, including horseback riding, canoeing, trapping, hunting, and fishing while including newer outdoor activities such as rock climbing, hiking, and cross-country skiing. Some of the activities were on the reserve (I needed a Band-signed permit), and other activities occurred on off-reserve traditional lands. The students were allowed to participate in a school class designed to meet some of their traditional learning needs.

My next teaching position was at an adult reeducation college. Not only was there a significant Aboriginal population, but also most of the students had not been served well by the traditional education system. Many of the academic upgrading courses were designed to meet specific student needs and did not follow Alberta Learning curricula until the students approached Grade 12 departmental exams. Once again, my teaching focus was on meeting student needs and not teaching a curriculum.

Further Education

Other events in my life also influenced my view of education and curriculum. Over the years I took different teaching assignments, including working with severely physically and mentally handicapped children. The use of curricula would vary from specially developed units to slightly modified units. Each child had a different program. One of my own children was diagnosed with a chronic illness at age three. This required hospital and specialist visits, a monitored diet, daily activity, and daily medication. I learned how to balance activity with the other special requirements needed to maintain good health. I have coached numerous school and community sport teams, thus coming in contact with different children and families in different settings. Since graduating from university with my bachelor degree, I have taken a university-level course, on average, every two years. This continued exposure to different courses and different philosophies has often caused me to reflect upon my educational philosophy. As well, I have travelled with my family from the west coast of Vancouver Island to the most easterly tip of Newfoundland to the northern waters off Tuktoyaktuk. My many weeks on the road and in communities across the country provided the opportunity to experience different people and cultures. Although I did not consciously think about curriculum development, small, independent events were becoming the foundation for a slowly evolving personal philosophy of education and curriculum.

Throughout my years in education, my interest in curriculum has changed. As a beginning special education teacher and counsellor, curriculum documents were not the main focus in defining my role. Social studies had a well-defined curriculum, but specifics and resources were my choice. During these early years of my career I gained

little insight into curriculum and its place in education. I was young, enthusiastic, and too idealistic to take a deeper interest in education. Curriculum was just something I used to round out my job assignment of teaching social studies. As I matured, my career direction went toward administration, my children entered the school system, and I became more politically astute. I started to look more at cultural and curriculum issues.

As a beginning classroom teacher I had been taught a specific protocol for developing and implementing lessons. I initially followed the format I had learned at university. During my first two years I was regularly evaluated by a principal and superintendent for a permanent teaching contract and a permanent teaching certificate. As well, Alberta Education evaluated the school at which I was teaching during their regular rotation of school evaluations. In order to appear competent in the eyes of my evaluators, I was "caught up teaching with a singular meaning of the word curriculum" (Aoki, 1996, p. 9). I grew and experienced more of teaching and the different localities from which students come as I moved to different jurisdictions and increased my life experiences; I was re-forming my teaching philosophy. Slowly my view of curriculum evolved. I moved from a singular meaning of curriculum, curriculum-as-plan, to a landscape of lived curriculum (Aoki, 1996). It was not until reflecting upon curriculum and my life in teaching during a course with Dr. Ted Aoki that I was able to place myself within this landscape. In retrospect I saw my understanding of the curriculum as lived as opposed to planned. All people do not interpret curriculum in the same way. Curriculum is multivocal with many voices and different voices taking up the task of interpreting curriculum.

These days it seems that rarely a week goes by when educational stories are not included in newspapers and on television. Depending on the time of year, issues range from enrolment, funding, provincial test results, a PR event at a local elementary school, and, with more frequency, a violent event in a high school. Education has become fodder for the media, and issues are not always clear. What is arguably the most important detail in the whole educational picture is the curriculum, and it rarely receives any media coverage. Over the past decade, schools in Alberta have implemented new curricula in math, science, and language arts. Except for a few concerns raised over the introduction of Science 10 and its different focus from Biology 10, Chemistry 10, and Physics 10, there was virtually no media coverage. Unless you were involved in a specific curriculum area, sought to stay abreast of curriculum changes, or entered into conversation with teachers regarding curriculum change, things were relatively quiet on curriculum coverage. The media often chose to focus on issues such as traditional or back-to-the-basics views of education, district results on provincial achievement exams, or monetary issues.

Searching For a Topic

After two years of graduate courses, I was searching for a current curriculum topic on which to focus my research. If I had not become involved in graduate work at the same time that Alberta Learning was developing a new social studies curriculum, it might have passed me by. I had spent a couple of hours in conversation with Alberta Learning's Director of Education. In response to my question whether there was anything new or controversial happening in curriculum, he suggested that I watch for the first draft of the *Foundation Document* for the WCP social studies curriculum. The timing of the

development of the WCP social studies curriculum provided the opportunity for me to further expand my horizons and engage in curriculum inquiry. It allowed me to reflect upon my transformation through the many years of my career. My life-long experiences, the courses I took in graduate studies, and my current research have influenced how my understanding and perspectives have grown. I had hoped to gain wisdom and be transformed in my understanding of curriculum issues. Becoming involved at the start of public involvement in the new social studies curriculum enabled me to continue my journey. The social, political, cultural, and historical forces shaping education and curriculum change (Ghosh, 1991) were new to me and required many steep ascents and endless steps to remain involved and informed. Novak (1978), using a metaphor of mountain climbing to describe a journey, stated: "Climbing requires effort. It requires patience, shrewdness, discernment—but especially patience. And above all, what St. Teresa of Avila cherished, *determination*: will, resolve, endurance, even when blisters on one's heels are rubbed raw" (p. 59).

I was searching for a curriculum topic and had taught social studies. I was about to begin the arduous journey of writing my dissertation. The social studies curriculum had the potential to be interesting, controversial, and a wonderful opportunity for me to gain a wider understanding of curriculum development and implementation.

CHAPTER 2

COMING TO THE QUESTION

Introduction

In 1993 the Ministers of Education of the four western provinces and two territories developed the concept of the Western Canadian Protocol (WCP) to collaborate in curriculum development. The final core curriculum to begin development was social studies. Provincial teams were selected to include Aboriginal and Francophone representatives as partners in the development of the curriculum. *A Foundation Document* was produced to provide direction to the developers of the common curriculum framework for K-12 social studies. The social studies *Foundation Document* was a collaborative effort among several cultural groups in the western regions.

At the beginning of the project, four western provinces and two territories took active roles in the WCP process. Each jurisdiction in the WCP social studies project assembled teams to lead development and discussion of a social studies framework. The WCP stated their aim was to "meet the needs and reflect the nature of the twenty-first-century learner and have the concept of Canadian citizenship and identity at its heart" (Alberta Learning, 1999, p. 4). The WCP social studies curriculum project offered the opportunity for any interested party to participate in curriculum development. It was attempting to develop a curriculum that would be "reflective of Aboriginal, English language, Francophone, and multiple cultural perspectives" (Alberta Learning, 1999, p. 4).

The social studies curriculum was left to the last of the four core subjects. It had been perceived as the most difficult curriculum on which to gain wide spread agreement

on content and philosophy. One Alberta Learning manager at a curriculum symposium in Red Deer in 2000 stated that science, math, and language arts concepts, although cultural, could be more closely agreed upon at a national or regional (WCP) level. Social studies, due to its nature and definition, lends itself to different perspectives, meanings, and expressions. *Social studies* (Alberta Learning, 1999) is defined as

> the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. It is an interdisciplinary subject that draws upon many disciplines, including history, geography, economics, law, and political science. Social Studies focuses on people's relationships with their social, physical, spiritual, cultural, economic, political, and technological environments. Social Studies helps students become active and responsible citizens within their communities, locally, nationally, and globally, in a complex and changing world. (p. 5).

One of the initial stages was the WCP creation of a draft *Foundation Document.* The *Foundation Document* of the WCP Social Studies K-12 Common Curriculum Framework offered the opportunity for teachers and other interested educators to observe curriculum development during the beginning stages of the process. The Alberta team then revised the document for presentation to Albertans. The next step was to seek a response to the draft document through a common response form available at consultation forums and through the Alberta Learning web site. This part of the process provided an opportunity to participate in the development of a new curriculum.

The process of developing a new social studies curriculum began in the mid-1990s. After several years of work including committee meetings, focus groups sessions and other means of collecting feedback, Alberta Learning reviewed its purpose in developing a new social studies curriculum and officially withdrew from the WCP social studies project in November 2001. Notification was sent to school divisions, the Alberta Teachers Association and other groups. Rumours had preceded the withdrawal by many

months. There was very little surprise in this action from many of the social studies teachers who had been following the process. A summary of why Alberta Learning withdrew from the WCP includes the slow pace at which the curriculum process was moving. The validation process from various stakeholders was slow and the province has a schedule for curriculum development. As well, the division IV social studies curricula were too different among the participating provinces and territories. The large discrepancy made it difficult to negotiate a shared curriculum. Alberta Learning described the withdrawal process on its website.

Original Intent

My interest in curriculum development was kindled when I began my doctoral program. I was part of a cohort that consisted of 15-20 graduate students. My interest in curriculum was renewed during my first course which was with Dr. Daiyo Sawada. My interest grew during another course with Dr. David Blades and continued during a summer course with the renowned Dr. Ted Aoki. The topic of the courses was always in the curriculum field but the content was wide and varied. We explored more theories and entered into more philosophical discussions than in my courses in curriculum and educational foundations decades ago during my undergraduate program. A vast universe was opening and I was allowed to explore it. As a cohort from eight different school districts, we were teaching under different conditions and with different leadership. With most of us being administrators and having many years of teaching experience, we had many similar experiences and ideas. However, there was also a wide spectrum of differing philosophies about education and curriculum. My experience and interest lead me toward studying the discourse of curriculum. I was not interested in a specific

curriculum but in how curriculum itself was presented. I began to explore my options in educational curriculum. The WCP social studies curriculum project was beginning. I saw this as an opportunity and I prepared to explore it.

I was intrigued with new social studies curriculum project. At the same time as I was ready to begin framing my research by developing my dissertation proposal, the social studies curriculum development process had finally reached the public stage with the release of the April 1999 draft of the *Foundation* Document. Along with my graduate coursework, I had some background knowledge that would assist me when reading and interpreting the WCP K-9 social studies *Foundation Document.* I had taught junior high social studies and had helped write a grade seven social studies text. There were several roads for exploration and after much discussion, undertaking an interpretation of the *Foundation Document* was my choice. The Alberta team's process of seeking a response to the draft *Foundation Document* provided an opportunity to examine the discourses involved in the development of a new and potentially progressive curriculum. I proposed to do an interpretive inquiry of the *Foundation Document.* I would include listening to personal stories of people involved in the process to help uncover meaning and acquire an understanding of a curriculum development process.

My research was about the development a new curriculum. The range of topics available in a curriculum study can be very broad. The possible avenues included what area of curriculum to study, how to frame the study, the methodology to use and the reporting style. I had decisions to make. I talked to many different people involved in different areas of education and considered their feedback when reflecting upon my interests.

The Story of Conducting the Study

As with many journeys, there are several different places when you can reflect upon your direction and make decisions about changes and take a different route to the destination. Sometimes the journey becomes the adventure and the destination becomes the end-point. In my research I took a slightly different path than I originally intended and my journey received a new focus. I was still carrying out an interpretation of the *Foundation Document* but was changing focus to the interviews I conducted rather than the discourse of the *Foundation Document*.

First Plan and First Questions

Originally, the intent of my research was to undertake an interpretation of the WCP social studies K-9 *Foundation Document*, April 1999 draft. An interpretive inquiry would allow for a better understanding of this small part in the evolution of a new curriculum. The *Foundation Document* and focus group sessions were the beginning of a long procedure. This early phase set up the rest of the process. The information gathered by Alberta Learning would form the basis for a framework that would guide the development of the curriculum. The main objective of my research was to complete a textual analysis of the discourse of the *Foundation Document*. To prepare for interpreting the document I interviewed people involved in the early phases of the WCP social studies curriculum process. The interviews were conversations with selected members of the Alberta steering committee and other professional educators. The variety of roles and experiences of the interview participants provided an opportunity to get different perspectives of the *Foundation Document* and response process. By exposing myself to the many perspectives, I hoped to be able to discern a broader range of meanings in the

text. The conversations were to access the perspectives of people from other communities and provide me with a better sense of what the document meant to them. My research proposed to be a curriculum inquiry into the discourse present during the development of a curriculum document.

I began my interviews with a small list of names. I added more names after discussing my research with other educators and after conducting some interviews. In an effort to reflect the communities identified in the development process, Anglophone, Francophone and Aboriginal people were included in the interviews. Participants included: an Alberta Learning employee, *Foundation Document* steering committee members, teachers with a range of experience from Grades 1-12 and adult education, university professors, graduate students, school district curriculum specialists, school-based administrators, an A.T.A. representative, a member of the WCP group that developed the *Foundation Document*, and a member of a non-profit foundation that attempts to influence social studies education were all part of the profiles. Some participants belonged to more than one group. All but one participant attended a focus group session. The only person who did not attend a focus group submitted a response via the Alberta Learning website questionnaire. The different roles of the interview participants provided an opportunity to get others' perspectives of the *Foundation Document* and response process. By exposing myself to the many perspectives, I was able to hear a broader range of interpretations of the *Foundation Document*. The conversations provided me with a sense of where people were at in their life and how their place in life was reflected in what the document meant to them.

My research was intended to provide an insight into the tensions and issues present during a curriculum project. The discourse that comes into play in developing a curriculum is often examined or deconstructed after a curriculum becomes a program of studies. Being in conversation with people involved in an early stage of the WCP social studies curriculum and questioning their recollections would provide rich data about their understanding of the key ideas at work in the curriculum development. I proposed to use a hermeneutic approach to interpret the language used in the *Foundation Document* and my interviews. I was seeking a new understanding of curriculum development. My task was to consciously seek what was at work in the language of the document and the people I interviewed. Through questioning and discussion in the interview, both the interviewee and I had the opportunity to further our understanding of the *Foundation Document*, the curriculum process and the places of our everyday lives.

As I set out to conduct my interviews, my research was guided by the following question:

> What meanings can be discerned through a discourse analysis of the WCP social studies *Foundation Document* and the response process?

I proposed two subquestions to facilitate my work on the main question:

1. What are the key metaphors used in the document and discussions and what are they saying?
2. What ideological beliefs, assumptions, values, and multiple meanings become evident in interpreting the *Foundation Document* and in analysis of conversations with people involved in the WCP curriculum development process?

My general expectation was to provide an understanding of some important ideas that are at work in an early phase of the curriculum development process. This would help in understanding how the curriculum provided to the classroom came to be and how it is accepted by people in education.

Data Collection

My intent was to interview people involved in the WCP social studies curriculum development process to inform my understanding of the process. After the interviews I was going to perform an interpretive inquiry of the *Foundation Document*. After completing and transcribing the interviews I hoped to come to a wider understanding of the *Foundation Document* and curriculum development. I interviewed thirteen people who were working in various educational institutions in Calgary, Red Deer, and Edmonton.

Transcribing the interviews allowed me to revisit the conversations. After transcribing the interviews and rereading them, I was able to reflect upon the multiple realities and perspectives present in a curriculum development process. Listening to the voices allowed me to better understand this particular curriculum process in all its ambiguity and complexity. The data I collected was so rich I was led to focusing my research on the people's experiences with the *Foundation Document* and not on the discourse of the document itself. The emotions that became evident when talking about curriculum development and the *Foundation Document* related to a personal understanding of the place of culture and multiculturalism within the curriculum. This understanding related to each person's place as defined by their life experiences. The cultural and multicultural perspective present in the *Foundation Document* became the

focus of the conversations and the social studies content became secondary. Because I was not interested in the content of a specific curriculum, my study became focused on the process of developing a curriculum and the perception of people involved in the development of the curriculum.

New Plan and New Questions

After completing and transcribing the interviews, I rethought the purpose of my study. After discussing the content of the interviews with my advisor, I reevaluated my research question. Through an appreciation that grew out of my analysis, I changed my original question and reframed it from a subquestion from my original question. My research became guided by the following questions:

1. What ideological beliefs, assumptions, values, and multiple meanings become evident in interpreting the *Foundation Document* and in analysis of conversations with people involved in the WCP curriculum development process?
2. What are the experiences of people involved in the curriculum development process and in what way is their understanding related to their locality as disclosed through our conversation?

A subquestion to facilitate my work on the research questions was:

How does the involvement of people interviewed in the WCP social studies curriculum development project reflect on curriculum development?

This research was an interpretive inquiry into a foundational activity in a curriculum development project. I wanted to know what the document said and what people said in response to the document. The study explored the process of developing a

curriculum document and the place of social studies people—teachers, curriculum developers, university professors and others—in the process of developing a curriculum. My study took place within the *Foundation Document* time period and this provided a window to view practices in the early stages of curriculum development.

CHAPTER 3

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, MULTICULTURALISM, AND CULTURE

This chapter draws from reconceptualism, critical theory, and feminist-postmodernism in its analysis of ideas pertaining to culture, multiculturalism, and curriculum development. These are ideas that have helped me to make sense of the influences on curriculum change generally and the specific data in this study concerning the WCP social studies K-12 framework. In working with the literature that supported this chapter, I have sought to reconstruct my own understanding of the processes, influences, and challenges in curriculum development, particularly as these relate to culture and multiculturalism.

Introduction

In order to better meet the needs of society through education, this chapter suggests that the Western, modernist curriculum structure should be explored. The way knowledge and power are interconnected and frame current educational practices needs to be questioned. Current educational structures originate from a position of power and privilege. From reconceptualist, critical theory, or feminist-postmodern perspectives, there is no neutral ideology and the construction of knowledge is tied to power and authority. The belief system of the dominant culture becomes reflected in the educational framework and the curriculum. Educational development in Canada has been dominated by European ethnicity and ideology (Pauls, 1996). The Eurocentric bias and representation of identity and knowledge in curriculum, as defined by modernist ideals do

not allow minority and marginal groups to see themselves positively represented in the curriculum.

Important questions regarding curriculum include: What bias is present in the curriculum? How are identity, ethnicity, culture and place defined? In a modernist sense, identity, ethnicity, culture, and place are defined somewhat statically. In a lived curriculum, however, they have meanings that are always evolving. They are neither separable nor static. There is ongoing interaction and negotiation between "individual subjectivities" and "objective cultural identity" (Balibar, 1995, p. 174). Place—the ground for identity—was once thought of as a container of culture, but is now better understood as being formed by "the crossing routes of people and cultures" (Crang, 1998; as cited in Ellis, in press). Thus, as places change, so too do the conditions that support identity formation and influence the significance of ethnicity, gender, and class.

Through a lived curriculum, as understood within reconceptualist, critical theory, and feminist-postmodern perspectives, culturally diverse experiences for students are possible. Students are expected to construct knowledge. A lived curriculum, as explained by Aoki (1993), is attentive to the stories and languages the students and teachers live. The plan is lived out with awareness of the "archi-texture of the curricular landscape" (p. 255) as opposed to a curriculum laid out in a plan. Slattery (1995) expanded on the possibilities a lived or postmodern curriculum brings to education. Such a curriculum has five key elements:

1. It "respects the unique development of the individual and recognizes the interrelationship of all experiences."

2. It "must be formed in all classrooms where the discourse is shared, empowering, emerging and tentative."
3. It "is eclectic and kaleidoscopic, and…should move beyond the oppressive structures of modernity."
4. It must be viewed in terms of the process of enlightenment rather than in terms of specific educational ends.
5. It must be inclusive and must draw from a variety of contemporary theories. (pp. 353-355)

Modernism is a term that is open to debate and little agreement. Modernists question educational practices but as Giroux (1992, p. 119) noted, "The central question for modernists has been 'How can I interpret and master this world? How do I constitute myself within it?'" The modernist idea began in the 18th century promoting the Enlightenment ideals of control and progress through the nation and national character (Richardson, 1998). Modernist education reflects the attributes of control and progress in aiming to produce a western citizen. "The crude functionalism of the economic production model of education has its political equivalent in the state's production of national identity or national consciousness" (Richardson, 1998, p. 78). Individual or cultural identity is suppressed in favour of a national consciousness. Minority and marginalized groups get pushed further from the centres of power within a modernist educational system that originated from a White, male Eurocentric perspective.

In exploring a modernist perspective, researchers question the modernist foundation of knowledge and how it is reflected in our curricula. The modernist approach attempts to organize knowledge to create order. This enables the application of a grand

narrative to reinforce the dominant culture's knowledge. "In Canada formal education has always served as an assimilationist tool" (Ng, 1993, p. 54). Moving away from a modernist approach means not having to fit the dominant culture's current model of education. It allows for the reconsidering of the knowledge and methodology used in curriculum development and implementation. Education can become a "major agent for social change" (Ghosh & Ray, 1993, p. vii).

Cultural pluralism addressed through a multicultural curriculum can more accurately reflect the culture and histories present in our classrooms (Banks, 1993). Multicultural curricula can help students develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to understand the social context of the knowledge presented in curricula (Banks, 1993). Throughout the development of curricula in Canada, curricula have discriminated against minority and marginalized groups. The curriculum has favoured the dominant White, European culture. The education provided to Natives has generally been inferior to the education available to other groups (Pauls, 1996). The cultural and linguistic characteristics of Francophone students have been eroded through exposure to an assimilationist English curriculum (Alberta Learning, 2000). Proponents of critical theory and critical feminist-postmodern perspectives question the role of current educational practices, the delivery of knowledge, and the maintaining of the dominant culture's ideology. "Students should be given the opportunity to investigate and determine how cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and the biases within a discipline influence the ways knowledge is constructed" (Banks, 1993, p. 10).

A critical theory approach allows the rewriting of the relationship between knowledge and power and redefines the importance of difference and the Other. Giroux

(1992) and Apple (1993) discussed the Other as originating in a place of colonial oppression where many working class people, women, and people of colour reside. The Other "is often defined within totalizing and universalistic theories that create a transcendental rational White, male Eurocentric subject that occupies the centres of power" (Giroux, 1992, p. 113). Apple (1993) discussed the Other as often getting identified as enemies who are objectified and marginalized away from the centre of power. The Other is often seen as and individual, group or community that is outside of the universalism of the modernist perspective. Crang (1998) identified the Other through the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Othering becomes an unequal relationship with the dominant group having common features while the Other are non-members. The non-member or Other is defined in relation to the characteristics of another culture. In a modernist sense, cultural pluralism recognizes that cultures are different but does not articulate the concept of difference. Critical theories move culture from being contextualized as a grand narrative that is frozen in time. It allows for the exploration of the relationship between cultures and how they are inter-related. It recognizes difference and the Other in the ever-changing boundaries of a culture in relation to other cultures.

Critical theorists view current curriculum practices from a new perspective and offer a different focus than modernist practices. Critical theory can be used to examine the construction of knowledge and the power relationship within the curriculum. Critical theory works on the assumption that knowledge and the curriculum are not neutral. Giroux (1988), in his body of work, took a critical-theorist view of curriculum. He examined the modernist ideals of what constitutes our definition of educational theory and practice and questioned how "narratives get constructed, what they mean, how they

regulate particular forms of moral and social experience, and how they presuppose and embody particular epistemological and political views of the world" (p. 25). Curriculum privileges the dominant culture's definition of knowledge. By questioning the structure of education and the dominant forms of knowledge, curriculum developers can work towards transforming the structures of education and creating social change that addresses cultural diversity, ethnic concerns, individual identity, and the effects of the processes of globalization on school systems. Critical theory provides a starting point for questioning the modernist perspective of educational curricula.

Critical theory can be useful to begin an examination of curricula. Giroux (1992) stated that we should "broaden the parameters of how we think about schooling, education, pedagogy, and cultural politics" (p. 2). Critical theory, as Giroux articulated, often suggests a utopian end-point that can then become reflective of a modernist perspective. Apple (1993), also from a critical perspective, argues that the educational and cultural system maintains the existing social order. Education is only one part of the larger framework of social relations that contribute to cultural reproduction. Apple suggested that there needs to be meaningful curriculum reform as part of the critique of the cultural reproduction of social order. However, there are some shortcomings to a critical theory approach. Critical theory often does not go far enough into examinations of curriculum or instruction. Critical theory, as worked out by Giroux and Apple, does not provide suggestions on how to take the critical theory approach into the classroom. Ellsworth (1989) suggested that

> while critical pedagogy literature states implicitly or explicitly that critical pedagogy is political, there has been no sustained research that attempts to explore whether or how the practices it prescribes actually alter specific power relations outside or inside the school. (p. 301)

In addition to Giroux's (1992) and Apple's (1993) perspective of critical theory, I explore current discussions about influences such as globalization, dominant culture privilege, lived curricular experiences, and a person's place within their cultural history and their everyday life experiences. Lather (1992) has defined critical theory as that which "attends to practices of teaching/ learning intended to interrupt historical, situated systems of oppression. Such pedagogies go by many names: Frierean, feminist, antiracist, radical empowering, liberation theory" (p. 121). Considering additional perspectives offers the opportunity to explore other potential formations of the curriculum.

A critical feminist-postmodern perspective provides a further avenue for extending the reach of critical pedagogy and in reconsidering the relationship between curriculum theory and the localities in which they are implemented. Practical suggestions responsive to today's educational system can be generated through a feminist-postmodern theory. A feminist-postmodern theoretical stance is a critical perspective that recognizes the need to un-make and remake the curriculum field while "taking into account differing locations, social and cultural contexts, historical moments, and individual needs and desires" (Miller, 2000, p. 253). This holistic approach gives meaning to and "centres around the issue of voice' (Quinn, 1998, p. 37). It allows individuals to speak for themselves and define their own reality. A feminist perspective represents another way of seeing postmodernism. Hutcheon (O'Grady, 1998), regarded feminism as a multiplicity of viewpoints with a theory of agency, going beyond textual strategies to some form of social action. A feminist approach links social justice and local subjectivity together. Hutcheon asserted that postmodernism stops at deconstructing, whereas feminist theory moves to reconstructing identity and difference within the local context. Unlike a strictly

critical theory approach, feminist-postmodernism understands "the relationships that in fact constitute 'the field' are always needing to be remade, needing to be 'done again,' and in ongoing conversation with 'mutual respect' and 'regard for each one's competence and integrity'" (Miller, 2000, p. 265).

This study explores an early phase of the development of a new curriculum in Alberta. To that end, I draw on the work of several educational researchers from universities in Alberta. Among these researchers is Ted Aoki, who published extensively at the University of Alberta in the 1980s and into the 1990s. Carson, Ellis, Johnson, Richardson, and Smith are established as curriculum scholars at the University of Alberta. DePass, Smits, and Hebert are curriculum scholars from the University of Calgary. These people have provided relevant and constructive ideas that present a body of scholarship that recognizes the need to conceptualize and reconceptualize the curriculum field. Such explorations aid in seeking an understanding of curricula congruent with feminist-postmodern theory. Feminist-postmodernism rejects a modernist position of privilege that speaks for others and therefore does not define a curriculum framework through a universal or dominant perspective.

Curriculum Perspectives

Curriculum can be considered a modernist social construct of the dominant culture. Modernist cultural standards in teacher education and certification, design of curriculum protocols, standardized testing, and age/grade level objectives are all manifestations of the idealization of control and progress. Beyers and Apple (1998) critiqued a modernist curricula perspective and argue education should not be "something that is reducible to techniques of standardized testing, systems management,

behaviourism, and competency-based instruction" (p. 6). When this is the case, education becomes "a mirror of economic and industrial needs defined by the few" (p. 6). Other scholars also criticize modernist curricula from a variety of different perspectives. For example, in discussing the difficulty in opening discussions of curriculum and the influence of the dominant White, Eurocentric culture, Carson and Johnson (2000) noted, "lessons about white privilege will probably produce anger or guilt" (p. 81). Smith (2000), in discussing the threat of globalization to curriculum, described education as "serving the stable nation, creating the solid citizen, valuing a commodified liberal education for its own sake" (p. 9). He reminded us that education is a commodity in a deregulated labour market that has very little concern for students and teachers. Consequently, curricula have not always considered the effects on all stakeholders or allowed teachers to teach from within their locality. Referring to curriculum in a particularly Canadian context, Tomkins (1986) has also argued that the central organizing principle of the Canadian education system is one of a "nationalizing imperative" (p. 436).

Different knowledge, customs, and behaviours should not be perceived as less important. All "students need to have generous and positive access to their heritage culture while also acquiring knowledge of and confidence with the content and codes of the mainstream culture" (Ellis, 1999, p. 172). Ellis reminded us that the attitudes, beliefs, and institutional structures within education advantage "certain groups at the expense of others" (p. 174). In many instances, education can reward those children who come to school with a Eurocentric perspective, and they are privileged by the discourse of the school system. In privileging a Eurocentric perspective schools can marginalize minority

students or lead students to believe that the minority culture is somehow inferior to the dominant culture. The system should be questioned to allow exploration of social justice and to positively recognize the ethnicity of all students in our schools (Ellis, 1999).

A curriculum should consider addressing "the dialectical relationship between the 'individual' and 'society'" (Eyles, 1989. p. 116). People are shaped by their personal lives within the culture of everyday life. The curriculum should allow for conditions under which students are able to create a meaningful existence for themselves. Smith (2000) believed that the Eurocentric influence in education needs to be investigated before more inclusive curriculum possibilities can be conceptualized. He stated:

> There has to be a retelling of the historical tales such that the Other who have been silenced under the triumphant narratives of the empire are given their just due and embraced as necessarily contributive to any future worth sharing. (p. 23)

Curriculum revision and the retelling of history can occur together to open the possibilities for the Other to be more justly included and recognized.

There are many different ways of understanding, thinking, and talking about curriculum. There are different lenses, voices, ideas, conceptual frameworks, and arguments that conflict in defining educational curriculum discourse. It is a complex field with many different conceptions. Aoki (1996) stated, "The word curriculum is yearning for new meanings" (p. 14). The numerous theories and viewpoints regarding curriculum mitigate against possibilities for giving a fixed definition to the curriculum field. Increasingly, the study of curriculum becomes more varied and complicated. It becomes framed by geography, time, politics, and societal needs. The field allows for a reconceptualization and a multiplicity of voices to be heard. The multiple meanings of

curriculum suggest that a meta-narrative of the field is not possible and that controversy is inevitable.

The diverse field of curriculum theory includes constructs from educational policy, history, psychology, sociology, and philosophy. Hybrid areas will also "evolve out of existing sectors, across discourses, identifying areas of focus and specialization" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 868). The many possibilities in the curriculum field invite many conversations. The diversity results in a variety of value perspectives and tensions between centralized and marginalized groups with a stake in educational development. The object of my study, the WCP social studies curriculum project, invited many perspectives and such tensions became evident in the focus groups and the responses to the *Foundation Document.*

The social studies curriculum structure in Alberta has remained within a modernist perspective. As a modernist text, questions emerge about whether the existing curriculum is able to provide children with the capabilities and understandings they need to enable them to fully participate in society. The WCP social studies *Foundation Document* intended to offer perspective that was more inclusive than the current curriculum. This attempt was evident in the vision statement which read, "The Common Curriculum Framework . . . will be reflective of Aboriginal, English language, Francophone and multiple cultural perspectives" (Alberta Learning, 1999, p. 4). The vision statement attempted to promise a sense of Canadian spirit that would create a sense of belonging for every student. A critical theory framework suggests that curriculum should be rebuilt differently from the way it had been done in the past. It appeared that the WCP social studies curriculum was open to a different and new understanding. The

Foundation Document stated that the curriculum should move toward multicultural perspectives and should move further toward connecting, empowering, and celebrating ethnicity in our Canadian spirit. However, in reading the *Foundation Document* critically, it seemed the document was written from a perspective that limited the parameters in addressing change. The document identified the groups who were to be the focal point of the curriculum and how they were to be involved. The attachments to the document defined two of the groups, the Francophone and Aboriginal people and why they should be involved. The other two groups consisting of English language and multiple cultural perspectives were not defined. The controlled focus of the groups involved and the input sought limited the change that could occur. The process was not as open as it could have been and social studies curriculum development fell back into a modernist perspective.

Alberta: Reviewing the Curriculum

Curriculum change and development are now scheduled to become regular occurrences in Alberta. Alberta Learning has produced an implementation schedule for introducing each new curriculum. The past director of curriculum made it known that curriculum implementation is on a schedule and that the reviewing of curricula will continue on an ongoing basis (Keith Wagner, personal communication, April 1999). The schedule for curriculum revision is posted on the Alberta Learning website. Math in elementary and junior high implemented a new curriculum several years ago, and high school math is currently undergoing changes. A WCP language arts curriculum was implemented in the elementary and junior high levels in the past few years. The social studies curriculum in Alberta has not had any major changes since the 1980's. The social studies curriculum was in the process of being redeveloped as a WCP curriculum. The

process opened to public input with the April 1999 (draft) of the WCP *Foundation Document*. Alberta Learning withdrew from the WCP in November 2001 deciding to develop an Alberta curriculum.

Alberta Learning was trying to practice a collaborative and democratic approach to social studies curriculum development by involving a wide range of stakeholders in the process. Those responsible for directing the social studies curriculum development project invited other people who were interested in social studies to respond to the *Foundation Document* (Alberta Learning, 1999). Aboriginal and Francophone groups were intentionally included as partners in the social studies curriculum development process. Contributors during the development of the *Foundation Document* included politicians, specific lobby groups, businesses, and textbook publishers, all with competing agendas. The people participating in education and curriculum development brought with them their own values and ways of seeing with belief systems that could influence curriculum decision making. Slattery (1992) reminded us that curriculum is not an object to be implemented. Ideally, curriculum would illuminate the past, transform the present, and actively move into the future. In spite of the fact that the WCP social studies curriculum development process attempted to be open to wide consultation that included public input, it had well-defined goals for an explicit curriculum and timetables for development and implementation. The result resembled a technical-rational curriculum designed to promote "domination of nature, mastery of external knowledge, and preparation for a pre-determined future" (p. 19).

This inquiry into curriculum development provides an avenue for exploring curriculum change and curriculum issues. Alberta Learning uses an "Informed Practice"

model that includes visioning, planning the curriculum, designing the assessment, and implementing the formal policy. These areas are interrelated and interdependent. With formal policy and assessment strongly influencing curriculum, the program of study becomes a curriculum-as-plan. The curriculum that schools receive and are required to implement is influenced by the philosophical perspectives of the authors or steering committee. The curriculum reflects the prejudices, ideologies, and beliefs of the writers. Statements of goals and objectives, including such keywords as *instruction*, *teaching*, *implementation*, and *assessment* result in curriculum as a singular object. It becomes a master curriculum under a planned authority. Aoki (1996) described planned curriculum as "the lone tree casting its benign shadow over the landscape such that 'teaching' becomes 'implementation' and 'instruction' becomes 'in-structuring' students" (pp. 9-10). Curriculum should move toward the multiplicity of possibilities and the "lived curriculum" (Aoki, 1993). A lived curriculum can be considered the planned curriculum lived out. It is the planned curriculum plus the lived experiences of the students being acknowledged. Living and experiencing the curriculum will allow the language of the school to provide multiple meanings of the curriculum and recognize students within the classroom. The lived curriculum recovers past experiences and waits for the ongoing experiences still to be produced. The lived curriculum includes the government-planned curriculum, but it also includes the "situated image of the lived curricular experience of teachers and students" (Aoki, 1996, p. 10).

A difficulty that Alberta Learning faced in the WCP social studies development was addressing the numerous influences and ideologies introduced through the first step of their curriculum development model, the visioning process. The WCP social studies

project included representatives from four provinces and two territories and specifically included Aboriginal and Francophone people. Focus groups were held throughout Alberta, which increased the number and diversity of the people involved. The consultation offered a multiplicity of possibilities and the potential for exploring the open space of possibility and developing a lived curriculum.

Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Change

According to Richardson (1998), Canadian culture and identity have not been addressed very successfully in Alberta social studies curricula since the Massey Commission of 1951. The 1955 and 1965 Alberta programs of studies for social studies did not develop or adequately address Canadian identity. Movement was made with the 1971 social studies program of studies to focus on national concerns and developing a national identity. However, national identity was still dominated by the English-speaking Canadian perspective, while French-Canadian nationalism was given only vague representation. Other ethnicities present in Canada were largely ignored. The 1971 curriculum did make the first steps in introducing the notion of national identity as being found in the interplay between cultures. However, it was limited to English- and French-speaking Canadians. In 1981 the Alberta program of studies continued the focus on identity and introduced the idea that national unity was a reflection of difference and was "a function of consensus, dialogue, and discussion" (Richardson, 1998, p. 109). However, the 1981 program of studies still characterized Canada as having cultural uniformity. There was very little mention of multiculturalism and other ethnic groups that make up Canadian culture. The 1990 program of studies for social studies is the current mandated curriculum and was to be replaced by the WCP social studies curriculum. Richardson

feels that the 1990 curriculum has strongly defined parameters of national identity and encourages students to question what a Canadian identity is and how important it is. Bilingualism and multiculturalism are part of defining cultural diversity (Richardson, 1998). Richardson believes that the curriculum is firmly rooted in a modernist paradigm in its use of terms that preclude students from exploring their own understanding of national identity. The programs of studies have evolved over the years to increase exploration of Canadian identity and support goals related to the pluralistic nature of Canada. However, the programs of studies over the years have been so prescriptive that there is little space for teachers to work out what pluralism is in their own localities. For example, the use of achievement and diploma exams further works against teachers shaping their lessons to address the characteristics of their localities. In order for Alberta Learning to administer one exam for all students in the province, curriculum expectations need to be the same for all provincial jurisdictions. Distinct outcomes and special units of study for different areas in the province would be difficult to address through a provincially administered test.

Possibilities of Change

In seeking to develop a social studies curriculum that meets current Canadian societal needs, curriculum developers should consider moving away from modernist definitions and towards an understanding of identity that reflects a much more diverse society. The WCP and Alberta Learning opened the door to exploring the pluralistic society of Canada by including Aboriginals and Francophone people as identifiable groups, along with people from White, English-speaking groups. Holding focus groups to gather feedback allowed further avenues for exploring the open spaces. The inclusion of

many different people from such a wide variety of backgrounds brought along not only diverse ideologies but also entrenched and traditional positions so often found in curriculum development (Tomkins, 1986). Difficulties were encountered, and as Richardson (1998) noted, defining the objectives, prescribing content, and using achievement and diploma exams put curriculum development back into a modernist perspective and could close off the exploring of the open spaces.

Curriculum can affect social change and develop cultural relationships through children. The critiquing of marginalization and creatively opening possibilities for students to become sensitive to others and explore difference can help students to understand what knowledge is of most worth to them where they are. Chambers (1999) suggested that where they are is 'here.' She stated that curriculum can help children survive in society. Children's survival does not come from theorizing or memorizing abstract concepts, but from "learning and living in a respectful relationship to their lived topos of here" (p. 142). Chambers described the challenge in opening the possibilities. The curriculum should be able to name where people are and what it is like to be where they are. She stated that people should be able to express what they know and want to know in a language that comes from where they currently are situated. Canadians should be able to develop an understanding of who they are while accepting personal and others' histories. The multiplicity and difference of our experiences define our journey while opening it to journeying elsewhere. By meeting these challenges, students can become sensitive to the possibilities in the spirit of a culturally relevant curriculum.

Culture

Canada is a pluralistic nation, and curriculum developers in Canada should consider addressing culture in a pluralistic manner. Bhabha (1990), in referring to culture, stated that critical exploration of issues opens spaces of possibilities in ambivalent spaces between the known and unknown and therefore speaks to the heart of education. The curriculum can provide an opportunity for students to understand and be comfortable within their own culture. Students could explore other cultures while maintaining a consciousness of individual identity. Exploring other cultures while maintaining a sense of individual identity can help us find our way together. This is not an easy journey and lends itself to other questions. Citing Frye's (1971) work, Chambers (1999) asked, "Who are we?" "Who am I?" and "Where is here?" Intersecting areas include class, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, and age. The intersecting and interacting of the histories open a new way of thinking about our being in the world. The interaction of the many groups in Canada means culture is not static or measurable. Culture becomes a hybrid and racial identity is a hybrid. It is a variable category that "can never be gathered up in one place as a final cultural property" (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993, p. xiii). Culture is always changing and evolving.

Understanding culture entails understanding difference. In education, teachers should try to come to an understanding of difference. Multicultural education includes examining and understanding cultural differences and being able to act capably within more than one culture. Carson and Johnson (2000) observed that, we, as educators, are beginning to understand that education is guided by a curriculum of sameness and "lack[s] the experience of educating for difference" (p. 76). Tomkins (1986) suggested

that the curriculum should struggle to reconcile or accommodate competing interests and values that are derived from the multitude of differences in our pluralistic country. There has not been sensitivity to others nor a curriculum that provides a knowledge of cultural identity. Cultural difference can be opened and explored through curriculum. Trying to understand difference promotes a "cultural-intercultural approach that develops capabilities to enable people to live in a pluralistic society" (Tomkins, 1986, p. 335). Through understanding teachers and curriculum, developers can call into question old orthodoxies and become aware of the remapping of social constructs and the emergence of new views of national identity.

Schools prepare students to participate in the social, political, and economic order. The issues of culture and identity should be acknowledged and addressed in any curriculum development for schools. "Education has always been shaped by predominant economic, social, political, cultural, and historical forces" (Ghosh, 1991, p. 302). Ghosh suggested that teachers and educators should realize the importance of including history and culture from a perspective other than that of a White, English-speaking Eurocentric one; otherwise curriculum development becomes a cultural study. No effective or established strategy exists for doing this (Reynolds, 2000). Because the various cultures that make up Canada do not exist as isolated entities and ethnicity is not static, an inclusive and integrated curriculum should be developed.

Identity is important in understanding who we are. Understanding who we are through identity is generated by personal meaning of who we are as sexual, gendered, classed, and socialized people. Meaning comes from the historical and geographical perceptions of the group. Smith (2000) argued that "identity emerges through a web of

relationships" (p. 23). Identity is constructed through the scaffolding of Others. It cannot be understood through one lens of discursive tradition because it is not static. Identity has to be considered multivocal and contradictory. Identity becomes a social and cultural production. The history and experiences of the groups are represented, reconstructed, and reinvented in everyday life. As people interact, the living relationship between them results in a changing meaning of personal identity. Some people find it difficult to deal with evolving change and understanding where they are situated. As relationships build or scaffold upon Others, there becomes an increasingly global context. Ethnic groups "do not emerge at an appointed time; they are made in the course of history, through ongoing struggles and engagements (Ng, 1993, p. 51). Denial of the significance of identity can perpetuate domination. To help in understanding identity, teachers have to place personal and student identity in relation to their social location to understand how this concept is constructed. As Greene (1996) has stated, "We have a better opportunity to achieve some kind of mutuality in our plurality if we can tap imaginatively into lives, . . . if we can recognize a role for situated knowing and situated speaking and pay head to vantage points denied too long" (p. 40).

The language that curriculum developers and teachers use to discuss race, identity, and understanding of others "suggests a linguistic right and ideological struggle" (Britzman, Santiago-Valles, Jiminez-Munoz, & Lamash, 1993, p. 188). The use of language can assert old identities in the guise of new concepts. The dominant culture and discourse supports a given society, and the use of biased language perpetuates the dominant ideological claims. Smits and Booi (1999) stated that in a redefined world, issues of race and identity cannot be described in the language of earlier times. Prejudice,

repression, and marginalization get buried in language. To come to an understanding of the spirit of race and identity through language, people should try to come to an understanding of the dialectical tension between the reality of what was and what could be.

As cultural groups, we need to know our beliefs and values before we can ensure their representation in curriculum. Reconceptualists such as Pinar and Slattery contended that students need to be able to use their personal experiences in the learning process. As teachers create spaces for students to share their experiences, both teacher and students become more critically aware of the cultural significance of these experiences. The curriculum conveys images of who we are as individuals. "We are what we know and what we don't know" (Pinar, 1993, p. 65). It becomes difficult to have an understanding of our culture and ourselves without knowing the values and attitudes that have shaped us and our culture. Who we perceive ourselves to be is how we will represent our identity and define what knowledge we find important. "Knowledge of who we have been, who we are, and who we will become is a text" (p. 63). If we as curriculum developers and teachers do not address the pluralistic nature of our nation, then the curriculum becomes a racial text.

Pinar (1993) believed that curriculum has been a racial text and an instance of repression. Understanding curriculum as a racial text implies understanding the complex relationships within a national identity. Identity "is a gendered, racialized and historical construct" (p. 61) that entails an awareness of difference. The representation of identity within curriculum was usually accomplished unselfconsciously in earlier curricula and resulted in curriculum becoming a racial text. The assumptions of curriculum in

representing culture should be reexamined. The Western belief that curriculum is colour blind is limiting and deprives minority cultures of access to their culture and history. It denies role models and identity to ethnic minority students while denying self-understanding to the dominant culture. The dominant White, English-speaking culture cannot understand itself without understanding the others. Aboriginal people, Francophones, African-Caribbean people, and many others have all contributed to the building of Canada. Their presence and contributions have supported all aspects of our life. Identity is complex and dynamic, changing with time, and it is the construction of gendered, racial, social, and historical difference. Curriculum attempts to recover memory of culture but can repress and distort the memory for minority groups. The dominant culture sets the limits on what is sayable and thinkable. Pinar stated that repressed knowledge becomes racial knowledge - shaping and transforming through the marginalized.

Tomkins (1986) described the framework of the White culture as a patchwork from the pluralistic Canadian mosaic. The study of culture and race should not exclude the study of the dominant White culture and its characteristics. Many have argued that whiteness is not situated outside history. Roman (1993) observed that White is a colour also and needs to be recognized as an influence on perspective. As curriculum developers, we should attempt to understand society's historical, economic, and political dynamics as we try to understand equality of cultures and address it through the curriculum. A curriculum of inclusion can only be as good as the vision of the people who develop and present it.

There is a complex relationship among culture, knowledge, and power (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993). The gains of one group can often come at the expense of another. Curriculum should enable the histories and cultures of the various groups to be taught in a responsible and responsive way in schools. The study of culture and race in education "must engage with the variables of class, gender, sexuality, and nation and their material expression in the discursive practices of social life" (p. xxvii).

Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society

Essential to teaching multiculturalism is an understanding of difference. By bringing difference to the fore, students can see society's categorization of identity and themselves through race, sex, gender, class, and age. Students would have the opportunity to deconstruct or demystify the meaning of difference and see labeling as a stumbling block to a fairer distribution of social power. A knowledge of difference also opens the relationship between equity and difference. Understanding difference allows the recognition of the uneven relationship between power and representation and can disrupt the dominant White, Eurocentric narrative. Britzman et al. (1993) reported that a multicultural curriculum that includes a pedagogy of difference and discusses race, sex, gender, class, and age can allow for an understanding that social power is unevenly distributed and lived.

Social and political influences on education make it necessary to consider multicultural education. At times curriculum becomes a political compromise. Ethnicity is an important issue in education and curriculum development. When the presence of one ethnic group is increased, it raises the expectations of other ethnic groups. Attempts to develop a legitimate curriculum often bring groups into opposition, and the struggle

can result in a curriculum "that does not satisfy everyone and that contains ambiguous and contradictory implications for schools" (Werner, 1991, p. 108). Teaching a multicultural curriculum is one way that would allow teachers to address how people interact with each other in society from where they are currently situated. It could provide the opportunity for students to ask questions and examine beliefs, values, and behaviours in other cultures. Through a multicultural education curriculum, students get the opportunity to gain an understanding of other cultures. An interpretive search for meaning will never be complete but can be refined and redefined through a multicultural curriculum that allows students to become observers of others' lived experiences.

How is multicultural pedagogy formed? If we are to address the needs of students living in a pluralistic culture, the current curriculum should be decentred and recentred away from modernist and Eurocentric dominance. In developing a multicultural curriculum, we should loosely define the objectives, content, and materials to reflect the necessary negotiation of multiple meanings and approaches. By not limiting whose knowledge we are teaching, we widen the range of possibilities of cultural exploration and interpretations. Individual expression of "cultural patterns lead to reconstituting received patterns through critical reflection and creative interpretation" (Bowers, 1995, p. 30). The curriculum possibilities need to be brought forth from close to the students and teachers. An empowering relationship between the learner and the skills and knowledge will encourage a community of learners more accepting of their own and others' ethnicities. Academic success and social acceptance, which is a precondition for academic success (Osterman, 2000), will be supported by a culturally relevant pedagogy.

A new curriculum that moves away from the dominant, modern perspective does not define the knowledge of a multicultural education. "Culture is a deep, multi-layered, somewhat cohesive hodgepodge of language, values, beliefs, and behaviours that pervade every aspect of a person's life" (Ovando & Collins, 1985, p. 101). Culture is not a static thing, but is always in relation to other ethnic groupings and is always in flux. Culture is not just constructed from individual histories and evolution but involves the merging of horizons and is constantly evolving. Ovando and Collins suggest that cultural pluralism could entail a mutual appreciation and understanding of other cultures.

Multicultural education should do more than add or replace current content in order to achieve a relevant pedagogy. Reform of the curriculum depends upon an evaluation and change of existing values and attitudes. McCarthy (1993) explained a critical approach to multicultural education that begins with a systematic critique of the construction of school knowledge and privileging of Eurocentrism. School knowledge should be culturally diverse and related to the students and their locality, and the experiences of the marginalized should be included. McCarthy (1993) summarized a multicultural curriculum model that emphasizes three types of cultural discourses: (a) cultural understanding, (b) cultural competence, and (c) cultural emancipation. At the level of *cultural understanding*, groups accept each other, communicate and are "sensitive to ethnic differences in the classroom" (p. 229). When *cultural competence* is achieved, students move beyond "cultural awareness" to become familiar with the language and culture of other groups. *Cultural emancipation* "is a more possibilitarian and social reconstructionist theory" (p. 229) that includes the first two concepts and

moves toward a reformist curriculum that enhances minority opportunities for success in school and in the community.

Cultural emancipation opens possibilities for minorities and cultural groups through social reconstruction. Emancipatory multicultural education in schools recognizes the plurality of classrooms. It values "individual ethnic history, culture, and language" (McCarthy, 1993, p. 238). Reformist education is based on social justice. Emancipatory multiculturalism critiques a modernist approach of universal understanding that privileges white, middle-class values (McCarthy, 1993). As with a feminist-postmodern approach to curriculum, cultural emancipation becomes a process for change that opens possibilities for minorities and cultural groups. Differences will always exist and there is no end-point but a model of cultural emancipation that is always being evaluated and reworked can help minority identities within a pluralistic society.

Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism

The colonization of Canada was the start of domination and marginalization. The first group to be racialized in Canada was the Aboriginal population (Ng, 1993). Before Canada was colonized, Aboriginal people were not considered a race. As the English and French political, economic, and social standards were being established, the concept of race was established. As colonization expanded and time went on, different or new "races" such as Métis were identified (Ng, 1993).

European supremacy and Christian morality dominated the cultural landscape in Canada. English and French languages were used by most of the colonizers and thus became the languages of the government and in education. Education for the dominated and marginalized in Canada was designed to impose cultural conformity. Tomkins (1986)

questioned the "long established anglo-conformity and Christian morality [that] was reflected in the curriculum" (p. 436). Teaching of Eurocentric ideology was intended to convert Aboriginal people to loyal subjects of the government. The eradication of Aboriginal beliefs and the promotion of Eurocentric ideology through religion and education continued and became the norm for all education in Canada.

The struggle between the English and French marginalized other groups. Groups that were marginalized included the Irish, Scottish, Métis, and Acadian people. As these groups fought for representation and acceptance within the English or French camps, other minority groups then became the marginalized. Canada became two nations in a bilingual country. An animosity between the two nations continued, and boundaries were established. English cultural groups settled in Ontario and in parts of the Maritimes and the west, whereas Francophone people colonized Quebec, parts of the Maritimes, and small pockets throughout the rest of Canada. As English and French Canada established two nations within one country, it "completely eclipsed the nationhood of the Native people" (Ng, 1993, p. 52).

In the development of education in Canada, the Eurocentric dominance continued to discriminate and marginalize Aboriginal groups. "The education provided to Native people has been traditionally inferior and designed by the dominant society to compliment the racist objectives and assimilation and acculturation of the Native people" (Pauls, 1996, p. 25). Pauls also observed that education became a negative influence and that the history of Aboriginal education is marred by failure. The cultural assault perpetuated by education became accepted and hidden over time. The curriculum

continued to promote White, Eurocentric ethnicity and ideology. The education system, through the curriculum and societal ideology, became institutional racism.

Cultural attitudes and beliefs have changed over time, but assimilation and acculturation are still hidden in the curriculum. The curriculum now includes ethnic representation. In texts and materials, race and ethnic characteristics are often static or homogenous representations. Aboriginals and other groups are represented from a Eurocentric perspective that shows them with a static, quaint, or picturesque set of characteristics. Studies of race and ethnicity should address how people define themselves and participate in social life. Race and ethnicity are not theoretical or stationary classifications, but they have converged, diverged, and changed over time. Teaching style, texts, and materials reflect a Western, Eurocentric perspective and thus remain as racial texts and reinforce negative stereotypes. As Pauls (1996) aptly stated, "The reversal of hundreds of years of policy will not happen overnight" (p. 37). Banks (1993) proposed that the curriculum should allow personal reflections of the past, present, and future. Through analyzing the knowledge presented in the classrooms and helping students understand how that knowledge is constructed, teachers can help them understand that different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups have different perspectives. Banks (1993) contended that "the curriculum should be reformed so that it will more accurately reflect the histories and cultures of ethnic groups" (p. 4).

Stereotypes that present Aboriginal culture through tipis, bareback horses, totem poles, war canoes, and dream catchers freeze the culture. These images of Aboriginals present students with a distorted view of the culture. "Students who are limited to the material understanding of culture have difficulty comprehending how events of the past

relate to Aboriginal attitudes and identity" (Sweet, 1994, p. 7). When the material objects disappear, the students will believe that the culture is no longer there (H. Smits, personal communication, October 2000). Aboriginal and ethnic cultures have to be understood through the changing values and attitudes of the people. The spiritual beliefs; the role of music, art, and history; the value system; and the ways of acting are part of the framework of the culture that can be opened to exploration and understanding. The culture should be presented as vibrant, modern, and adaptive. These changes can be implemented into curriculum as current changes are being made. This will be a difficult task, and as Tomkins (1986) questioned, can Canadian teachers ignorant of Aboriginal culture comprehend Aboriginal lifestyle, culture, identity, working on a trapline, and so on?

The content of a new curriculum should include knowledge that enhances the image of Aboriginal people. The education system needs to be completely redesigned to build identity and pride for Aboriginals to see themselves as nations of people. The curriculum, school environment, texts and materials, and teaching methodology need to become the source of success and inclusion. In the past, Aboriginal students' "academic success [came] at the expense of their cultural and psychosocial well being" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 2). Studies of Aboriginal culture, language, and lived experiences can enhance cultural understanding and pride for all students and not just Aboriginal students. While recognizing cultural pluralism and introducing an effective multicultural curriculum will acknowledge the diversity within a group and increase cross-cultural understanding, it is not the solution to the social and economic problems confronting minorities (Fleras & Elliot, 1992). A multicultural education that acknowledges and

integrates Aboriginal content in a way that is locally contextualized can help Aboriginal people take pride in their lifestyle and history and feel included in the classroom but is just the beginning in addressing social realities.

The Francophone population, although dominant in Quebec, is a minority in the rest of Canada. Throughout the country there are pockets of Francophone people who try to maintain French language, culture, and ideologies. However, Francophone people, along with Aboriginal people, feel that they are in a situation of internal colonization in Canada under the weight of the dominant English culture (Ghosh & Ray, 1991). Outside Quebec, most Francophone groups are minority ethnic populations, along with other European groups such as the Ukrainian, Russian, Hungarian, and German populations who have settled throughout Canada.

As with all cultures, Francophone ethnicity is different in different localities and has changed over time (Racicot & Hebert, 1999). At the end of the 19th century, legal rights were based on religion, which separated much of the English, Francophone, and Aboriginal populations from each other. In the mid-20th century, language was used to define the two dominant groups in Canada (Adam, 1999). In 1969 Canada passed the Official Language Act. As in early attempts to reform education, not much effect was felt by those at ground level. In most jurisdictions outside Quebec, Francophone culture and ideology were relegated to French language classes in schools. At the end of the 20th century, French immersion and Francophone schools were developing a following in Canada (Alberta Learning, 2000).

Francophone groups have felt that it has been a constant fight to secure education in French. The further away from the French community the people become, the more

detached they are from their language, linguistic, social, and psychological roots (Adams, 1999). Dr. Dyane Adam (1999), Commissioner of Official Languages, said in a speech that "in order for young Francophone children of today to be able to adequately fulfill their role of citizens in the world they must . . . be deeply and firmly rooted in their Francophone reality and culture" (p. 1). French is the cornerstone of their existence and vitality as an ethnic group and community.

Today, Francophone leaders in Western Canada want the dominant English schools to include Francophone history and culture within the curriculum. In the document, "Affirming Francophone Education," one mandate of Francophone education is expressed as helping to "correct the linguistic and cultural corrosion suffered by students and the community in a predominantly English milieu" (Alberta Learning, 2000, p. 11). Francophone communities do not want to be grouped with other White, European cultures in Canada. They want to have what they feel is their rightful place as cofounders of confederation and equal partners in the colonization and development of Canada as accorded in the section 23 of the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Racicot & Hebert, 1999). Francophones feel that the Western, Eurocentric curriculum is an English-speaking Anglo narrative that has suppressed their social growth. They would like new curricula to include Francophone ideologies, histories, customs, and worldviews alongside English and Aboriginal perspectives. "The Francophone school must be an establishment whose pillars are language, identity, culture, and community integration" (Alberta Learning, 2000, p. 10).

The WCP *Foundation Document* focused on Aboriginal and Francophone groups along with English-language and other cultural groups. The *Foundation Document* refers

to Aboriginal people as one group and Francophones community as one group. Several of the points defining the role of social studies and the guiding principals refer to Aboriginal and Francophone groups but not other cultural groups. In reality, Canada is a pluralistic society with much diversity within each of the Aboriginal and Francophone groups as well as in all ethnic groups. McAndrew (1991) discussed regional variation within cultural groups. The ethnic diversity and regional variation result in a complex situation for developing a multicultural curriculum for a pluralistic society. Bullivant (1981; as cited in Fleras & Elliot, 1992), stated the multicultural reality is that "there is no one agreed body of ideas about multicultural education or the philosophy of multiculturalism" (p. 187). Through a multicultural curriculum, educators can include more students but the curriculum always needs to be reworked and reevaluated to meet the ever-changing needs within our pluralistic society.

A Landscape of Multiplicity

Curriculum developers and educators, through the development of new curricula, texts, and materials, have attempted to gradually break down long-established, dominant forms of knowledge. Through current research in the development of new curricula, the previous curricula have been questioned and refocused. New curricula attempt to show a new respect for cultural diversity.

There are many outside influences on curriculum change. With all the possibilities for change and potential discontent, a question may be, "Why should changes to the curriculum even be attempted?" It would be easier to carry on from the traditional perspective with a small multicultural content. Most power in our society and within our educational system still resides with the dominant White, Eurocentric population. The

dominant perspective should be changed to include the other ethnicities that are within our country, and it is not an easy prospect. Along these lines, Alcoff (1991/1992; as cited in Roman, 1993) said:

> If one's immediate impulse is to teach rather than listen to a less-privileged speaker, one should resist that impulse long enough to interrogate it carefully. Some of us have been taught that by right of gender, class, or race, letters after our name, or some other criterion, we are more likely to have the truth. (p. 79)

What the curriculum should be is a philosophical and practical question that has a multiplicity of answers. Aoki (1996) urged us to change from a planned, technical curriculum to a lived curriculum. The lived curriculum is "the situated image of the live(d) curriculum experiences of teachers and students" (p. 10). In developing curriculum, it is necessary to address what knowledge and whose knowledge are of most worth. As the curriculum moves away from a Eurocentric dominant focus, it creates a space for other people's histories, memories, languages, and futures. The possibility to find themselves in the curriculum allows teachers and students to accept their histories and understand their personal place in the experiences of the moment (Aoki, 1996). As curriculum developers, teachers, and students begin to see the world through others' lived experiences, the multitude of answers to what knowledge and whose knowledge expands. Aoki (1993) referred to the expanding knowledge and multitude of answers as a curricular landscape of multiplicity. A landscape of multiplicity allows stories to be heard and different languages to be spoken and lived. Teachers and students interact and learn through a curriculum that is not enframed but provides a multiplicity of opportunities. Looking at the world from multiple intersecting perspectives can help provide a greater understanding of society. Sutherland (as cited in Tomkins, 1986), commented that

> parents and society have agreed that children need to learn how to do the essential tasks of what would become their lifetime work, they must learn enough cultural skills to function within their society, and they must learn the norms that will govern their behaviour towards each other and in society as a whole. (p. x)

Terms that Sutherland used, such as *essential tasks*, *lifetime work*, *cultural skills*, and *their society*, are undefined and contribute to the ambiguity. When large, diverse groups gather to develop a curriculum, the definitions for Sutherland's terms contribute to the openness of the question, what should the curriculum be, and what should children learn?

The development of a curriculum through a self-described "open process" becomes influenced by the number of contributions received and the addressing of the issues brought forward. Curriculum developers are challenged to come to an understanding of the realities of ethnic or other cultural groups and the relationship between what is shared and not shared. Ethnic identities are not static categories but are mobilized through daily interactions with others. Education becomes deliberately planned to transmit specific values, knowledge, beliefs, and skills. The curriculum is part of the structure that supports society, and groups want to influence the process of education. Demands on the curriculum become conflicting, and long-established Anglo conformity and Christian morality become questioned (Tomkins, 1986). The work of curriculum developers becomes a political process of developing and introducing a curriculum that meets the needs of society as defined by the people who have the responsibility for the curriculum development process.

Curriculum Content: Whose Knowledge?

Curriculum content can be selected from a universe of knowledge and ideologies. The existing curriculum results from what was previously thought important. As Werner (1991) noted, the curriculum is directed by such value questions as: What knowledge is of most worth, what should be taught, for whom is this knowledge important and when, what purpose should be pursued, and how should it be taught? The curriculum development process becomes a forum where people or groups wrestle over what the curriculum content should be. Critical questioning of curriculum content and process will allow teachers, curriculum developers, and students to become aware of the multiple lenses and layers of complexity (Bernard-Powers, 1995). Curriculum developers and teachers must consider how to engage the memories, histories, and stories in the context of everyday life. The resolution of possibilities can be through consensus or through the use of power. The use of power should be understood through a wider cultural sphere and in terms of whether it opens up or restricts the possibilities in exploring knowledge and ideologies (Giroux, 1988). The relationship between the curriculum and the locality needs to be critically questioned and explored to better understand the cultural possibilities.

Curriculum discourse has been strained by institutional structures. "Within the discourse of modernism, knowledge draws its boundaries almost exclusively from a European model of culture and civilization" (Giroux, 1988), p. 5). White European culture is privileged through the representation of its history, cultural criticisms, and expressions of everyday life. Identity politics can be divisive and destructive and cause a crisis of representation. Oppressed groups are constrained by discursive boundaries. The

stringent boundaries have repressed the histories and realities of the oppressed and are treacheries of narrow, limited representation. In moving toward a multicultural curriculum discourse that understands ethnicity as a concept with infinite possibilities, the institutional structures can support rather than constrain. The current educational field has been dominated by traditionalists and empiricists who presented curriculum removed from "time, history, place, and human intervention" (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 20). Knowledge was based on surface meaning and life histories were repressed. Kincheloe and Pinar stated that to deny the past is to be spiritually crippled. Curriculum has to involve an examination of the dialectic interplay of history and the lived world. "Our knowledge depends on the living relationship between what we see going on and ourselves" (p. 21). When we accept a living past, our present world grows. Curriculum discourse should be anticipating the wholeness, complexity, and ambiguity of the lived curriculum rather than presuming the limitations of a technical-rational implementation. This is in accord with Giroux (1988), who pointed out that the various discourses have to be examined in depth if we are to be open to the possibilities and offer educators "a broader theory of schooling and critical pedagogy" (p. 25).

What should children learn or what should the focus of the curriculum be to allow children to fully participate in society? There are many different ideologies about what children should learn and whose knowledge should define the curriculum. A concern in social studies is the inclusion of Canadian content and Canadian identity in the curriculum. The Massey Commission, a 1951 royal commission, espoused a philosophy that Canadian children should learn about their country, the history and traditions, and about a national identity. Tomkins (1986) observed that this is not an easy task and often

curriculum and curriculum policy appear "fragmented, disjointed, and incoherent" (p. 437).

Conclusion

The curriculum can never be redesigned to remove all domination. Cultural differences and conflict are part of a pluralistic society. Meaning is multiple, and every reader produces meaning from his or her own personal life experiences. Working within a critical theory perspective, I am suggesting a need for a reconceptualization of curriculum to provide a more socially just approach to addressing minority concerns within the curriculum. A critical theory perspective invites a rereading of the curriculum and the opportunity for the reader to negotiate meaning from the places of their everyday lives. In this manner, a curriculum takes meaning from the stored memories of a person's life experiences (Castenell & Pinar, 1993). People need to recognize the relationship between the past and present and the ties between personal histories and present political thought (Kincheloe, 1993). In understanding the existing relationship, it is important to consider that people are more than their last experience, histories, and how they have been acculturated. Cultural identities are multilayered, not static, and are constantly evolving. The hybridity and fluidity aspects of culture were emphasized by Joan Scott (1995), who noted that identity is "the unstable, never-secured effect of a process of enunciation of cultural difference" (p. 11). Identity continues to evolve through interactions in the community and at school. An understanding of a minority culture's world-view will allow a better understanding of their perspective. Recognizing the uniqueness of cultural groups can produce a balance in curriculum that allows a deeper understanding of the world. The different behaviours in various cultural groups need to be understood from

within the world view of that culture and not from the dominant cultural perspective. In education, we need to listen to the stories of all students.

A culturally relevant curriculum that represents diverse cultures in a positive manner will enable students to maintain their cultural identity while experiencing social acceptance by peers thus creating a better opportunity for academic success. The curriculum used in the classroom should include representation of local culture and opportunities to engage in social critique. If students from diverse cultures can participate in the selection of elements of the curriculum, this will support their development of positive identities (Ladson-Billings, 1998). If the curriculum includes the cultures present in the school community, all students should be able to find themselves represented positively in the curriculum. No defined knowledge or specific objectives can solve all problems. The curriculum should address those questions that are more important to answer at the local level. Eze (1997) referred to the dominant culture curriculum as discriminating between the cultured and the "barbarian." Eze viewed the Eurocentric perspective as an ordered hierarchy with White Europeans at the top of the human chain and with non-Europeans at lower points of "human, rational, and moral evolutionary capacity" (p. 5). In order to increase the opportunity for successful educational experiences for all students, conditions for students' development of positive identities must be ensured.

There is a belief in the power of curriculum change to affect student learning, reform the school system, and create a more understanding and accepting society. Schools can socialize children and educate them in more than one mode of thought. Schools can enable students to "have the opportunity to draw freely from both [their own

and mainstream] cultures in creatively constructing coherent and integrated social identities" (Ellis, 1999, p. 172). Ethnic minorities believe that contributing to the curriculum and being recognized in the curriculum can influence their standing in society. Osterman (2000) reported evidence that an individual sense of acceptance or belongingness in school relates directly to increased engagement in learning and improved student performance. Conditions in the "classroom and school influence students' feelings about themselves" (p. 360). Experiencing a sense of relatedness at school gives the students a stronger sense of social competence and "a stronger supply of inner resources" (p. 343). The resulting increased engagement and performance opens possibilities for fuller participation in society. The power of the curriculum to affect change is directly influenced by teacher behaviours, beliefs, texts and materials, and how teachers teach. There will always be a "divergence between the curriculum-as-planned and the curriculum-in-use" (Werner, 1991, p. 114). Other influencing factors include economic, political, social, cultural, and religious experiences. Curriculum is just one influence on the classroom and people's beliefs. Student life and learning also take place beyond the day in school. Narratives and beliefs have been constructed and shaped over generations through economic, political, cultural, and historical institutions (Ng, 1993). Orr (1992) stated that education needs to move to ecology, peace, and emancipatory movements. There should be an anchor point for the continual questioning of our social constructs, and the school and curriculum can lead the opening of that wider, ambiguous, third space. "If we can empower young people and move them to shape their stories and to tell them, to present something of their realities in an open space, then we also provoke them to pose the questions in which learning always begins" (Greene, 1996, p. 36).

Education can restore whole people, build positive identities, and help students move into the future as equal partners and builders of society (Bouvier, 1991).

In developing a new curriculum, there is the possibility to provide the grounds to deepen and extend the narratives on which the curriculum is based (Giroux, 1988). With the WCP social studies curriculum Alberta Learning saw the possibility to include two major Canadian cultural groups that had been mostly neglected in past curricula. The WCP document opened the discussion between groups about a major change in curriculum content and the way curriculum could be delivered in the province. Aboriginal and Francophone groups were brought into the curriculum development process as equal partners with the dominant Anglo group that usually develops new curricula. Alberta Learning saw the opportunity to address a needed area in the curriculum and realized they should include the specific groups to articulate their own needs and desires. Greene (1996) articulated, "Even as we strive for attentiveness, we cannot make the assumption that we know better what other human beings need than they know themselves" (p. 39).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter discusses my research process from the start of the discussion of data collection through to the beginning of the writing of the interpretative account presented in Chapter 6. During my graduate program I took a course with Dr. Ted Aoki in which we discussed the *signifier* in words. With the word *research* we would have discussed the word as search/re-search. Research becomes "to search again" or "to search more." One search takes place and another search is needed. I initially expected to search for meaning within the WCP social studies *Foundation Document*. As often is the case in a search or journey, new questions emerge, other roads appear.

In my research I did not hope to develop a new model for curriculum change or to suggest one right way to address curriculum development. To suggest one method or to ascribe one meaning is to fall back into a modernist perspective. I wanted my research to advance my own understanding of how curriculum comes to be. In this thesis I have worked out the transformation in my own understanding and hope that I have provided a window into the phenomena I found so illuminating.

I originally intended to undertake a document analysis of the WCP *Foundation Document*. In preparation for this, I conducted interviews with people who had participated in the document development or focus group process. The original purpose of these interviews was to broaden my interpretive frameworks for undertaking a discourse analysis of the document. After reading the *Foundation Document* and talking with people involved in its development, it appeared to me to have been composed by compiling contributions from Alberta Learning and Aboriginal and Francophone groups

and then being edited by an Alberta steering committee. Consequently, there was no unified discourse in the *Foundation Document*. What emerged that interested me more was the response toward some of the content of the document by the people I interviewed. As a result, my research became an interpretive inquiry into the experiences or perceptions of people asked to participate in the early stage of the development of the new social studies curriculum.

I began my research with an interest in the curriculum development process rather than in social studies curricula in particular. It just happened to be the social studies curriculum development process that was available for study at the time of my thesis work. Given the scheduling of the social studies curriculum development process, the responses to both the *Foundation Document* and the focus group forums became the primary focus of my research. My analysis became a dialectic among the texts (interview transcripts and scholarly work on curriculum theory) and me. I wanted to engage the interview conversation records to come to an understanding of people's experiences in a novel and important curriculum development process.

Interpretive inquiry, like much other qualitative research is concerned with process rather than outcomes or products, is interested in meaning—how people make sense of their lives—uses the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and involves field work—going to the people and the site (Merriam, 1988).

Interpretive work, like many forms of qualitative case study research, is focused on "discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied" (Merriam, 1988, p. 3). The purpose is to understand an event or process that is studied in its own context.

Within interpretive inquiry, analysis entails approaching the data holistically rather than with a "categories first" approach or imposing a preselected theoretical framework (Ellis, 1998b). The researcher systematically asks questions of the data. Answers to these questions often give direction for the next questions to be asked. In analyzing, coding, or categorizing interview transcripts, it is difficult not to become tempered by the process. Each inquiry activity of posing and systematically asking a question of the data set can be understood as a loop in a spiral representing all of the data collection and analysis activities in a study.

An interpretive inquiry also allows for "self-conscious reflection" (Ellis, 1998b, p. 32). During my data collection and interview transcribing, I became aware of some inadequacies in my pre-understandings regarding the process I was studying. My data analysis together with the reading I continued to do and the conversations with critical others I continued to have to support my research and interpretation led to a poiesis. My understandings of the process I was studying and the very questions with which I began were transformed.

After completing systematic analyses, the researcher searches for an interpretation that brings parts or events together to form a coherent whole and offer a more fruitful understanding of the people or process studied. Developing the interpretive account is a creative activity. The researcher understands that there is no meaning or knowledge waiting to be found "until the act of understanding brings it into being" (Ellis, 1998a, p. 7). Polkinghorne (1995) has elucidated the value or writing the interpretive account in the form of a narrative analysis. Similarly, (Ellis, 1998c) has argued that "stories mean more than they can say" (p. 42).

The interpretive account should include enough illustrative data to enable the reader to see how the researcher could see it that way while also providing enough material to enable the reader to formulate other interpretations from his or her own perspective. My interpretation is in itself a political act. It expresses my understanding as perceived from my present locality. To revisit the data at a later time would inevitably lead to a different understanding because my perspectives are not static but constantly evolving and being re-created through the effects of history and my interactions with others' perspectives. Thus my interpretation is not fixed or final (Ellis. 1998a). In my analysis and interpretation, I was seeking "not to discover the one true definition of what I witnessed, but to begin to come to grips with those events" (Boostrom, 1994, p. 63). Thus my interpretive inquiry does not aim to offer definitions or answers. It does not write the end of the story about the early stage of the WCP social studies curriculum development process, but rather is offered as a way to open the possibility for the beginning of new stories (Ellis, 1998a).

The Story of Conducting the Study

Data Collection Preparation

I acquired the *Foundation Document* from Alberta Learning as soon as it was available in Spring 1999. With my advisor, I discussed the proposed focus of my research and the initial steps for data collection. The data collection included interviewing people who were familiar with the *Foundation Document* and had attended a focus group forum or submitted a response to the document. I attended a focus group forum in May 1999. After reading the *Foundation Document* and attending a focus group session, I was ready to start interviewing interested individuals. The end of May and the month of June are

busy times for people in education, and I knew that I would not be able to conduct my interviews until school resumed in September.

Over the summer I started preparing for the interviews and began to develop a list of potential people to interview. Choosing and inviting people to participate in my interpretive inquiry was an interesting part of the preparation. All but two of the people I contacted were very interested in participating. (One person did not wish to participate because of unfamiliarity with the document, and another turned down my request due to a perceived conflict of interest.) I tried to cover a large demographic area by including male and female participants, teachers from primary grades to university professors, and others in Alberta Learning or private educational organizations. All the people were currently living within the Calgary-Edmonton corridor, but many had interprovincial experiences. All the people made good efforts to include me in their busy schedules. Several of the people on my original list of eight suggested other people whom they thought had something to add to my research. My final interviewee invited a colleague who had participated in a focus group session but had not followed the process and was interested in the progress of the WCP social studies curriculum development process.

All of the people I interviewed had a passion for education, and some of the people were especially committed to social studies education. All the participants had previous experiences with curriculum and an opinion on what they thought a social studies curriculum should include. The people I interviewed had a wide range of experiences in education. Of the 13 people, 6 were male and 7 were female. Two of the people were university professors. One interviewee was employed by Alberta Learning. Two people were school-based administrators, two were district curriculum advisors, and

four were teachers in the classroom. One person was retired from education and was employed by a nonprofit educational foundation, and the final person was on sabbatical doing graduate work. To further delineate the background and experiences of the people interviewed, further categorization is needed. Two Francophone and two Aboriginal people were included in the interviews. Other characteristics included being members of the Alberta social studies curriculum development steering committee, teachers with a range of experience from Grades 1-12 and university, an ATA representative on the curriculum development team, a past-president of the ATA social studies specialist council, a person who participated in language arts curriculum development, and a member of the WCP group that developed the *Foundation Document*. Some people viewed the *Foundation Document* from a perspective that was based upon several influences; for example, a Francophone high school teacher or a primary (Grades 1-3) generalist teacher who was also a past graduate student. I interviewed a total of 13 people.

The interview questions were developed in conjunction with my advisor and from my experiences in an interpretive inquiry course I had recently taken. The questions were open ended and were designed to avoid eliciting specific factual information. I wanted to "invite interviewees to search for memories or thoughts they would like to talk about" (Ellis, 1998c, p. 37). The questions were prompts to help the interviewees tell their story of involvement in social studies education, their understanding of curriculum development, and their experience with the WCP social studies project.

The Interview Process

The interview process began with a person who was a member of the Alberta social studies curriculum development steering committee. This person also contributed a literature review to the WCP project. Due to the circumstances, this person was not included as one of my research interviews but provided valuable feedback about the interview format during and after our interview.

The interviews began at the beginning of September 1999 and concluded by the beginning of December 1999. All interviews were held in quiet, private locations. The interviews provided the opportunity to create a bond or conversational relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Two of the people I interviewed provided me with articles they had read or written that they thought would be of interest to me during my research. Other people I interviewed asked about my research when we later ran into one another in a professional or other context.

All the interviews occurred during the day in the interviewee's office, in a common office, or in the teacher's classroom. Two interviews took place in school-based administrator's offices in Edmonton, one was in a curriculum consultant's cubicle at the Edmonton Public Centre for Education, one interview was conducted in a meeting room at the University of Alberta, and another was in a professor's office at the University of Calgary. Three teachers were interviewed in their classrooms or teaching offices in Calgary, Red Deer, and Sylvan Lake, and one teacher was interviewed in a school meeting room in his school in Edmonton. One curriculum advisor was interviewed in the researcher's school office in Red Deer, one interview was held in an Alberta Learning office in Edmonton, and the final interview of two people was held in a private consulting

office in downtown Edmonton. The interview sites were widely dispersed and varied, but they were all comfortable rooms for the person being interviewed. All interviews lasted up to one hour and were free from interruptions. To allow both the interviewer and interviewee to be more at ease, the conversations began with a "getting-to-know-you" opportunity. I would discuss my current teaching position, my interest and experiences in social studies, and my research interests. The interviewees often shared similar stories. In the interview I invited the interviewee to share personal reflections and recollections of his or her involvement with the *Foundation Document*. All of them allowed the conversations to be tape recorded.

To maintain a commonality through the interviews I started with the same questions. I used open-ended narrative inquiry questions that allowed the interviewees to recollect memories, feelings, thoughts, and stories from their experiences. As we progressed through the conversations, I asked questions from my list. If a topic had been discussed during the conversation, then I did not ask the related question from my list. Some questions worked well and elicited a larger response with some people but did not receive the same level of response from other people. A few of the participants became quite passionate in their response and in trying to make sense out of their recollections. The interviewees responded from their personal locality and thus focussed on different questions or answered in a manner that indicated a particular frame of reference. As interviewer, I had to consider the collection of answers and the connections among the answers (Ellis, 1998c). Through our conversations, people were encouraged to talk about things that were important to them. This provided an opportunity for me to get a sense of who they were.

I tape recorded all conversations and took notes during the interviews. I personally transcribed all recordings. Consent forms were signed by all participants at the interview and followed guidelines as established in the Ethics Review for my research proposal. For all participants I explained the purpose of my research at the start of the interview. I wrapped up the interviews by asking the participants if there was anything further they would like to add. The process of sitting down to an uninterrupted conversation with an educator takes a lot of coordination. Interviews were scheduled whenever the participant was available, and I fit the time into my schedule. Given the value of people's time, I treated each interview as a special time. On a couple of occasions interviews had to be rescheduled to fit the participants' personal schedules.

Most identifying elements of the interviews and specific characteristics of the individual participants are not included to protect the anonymity of the participants. Characteristics are reported generally and separately. Even though this information could have greatly enhanced the data reported for the study, issues of confidentiality took precedence.

Data Analysis

As a researcher I was concerned that my final text would faithfully describe my research journey. I monitored my progress and was cognizant of my steps as I moved through the analysis process. I transcribed all conversations and personally verified all transcriptions by listening to the tapes while rereading the transcripts.

The initial analysis consisted of reading each transcript several times and creating the initial categories or major topic areas. The analysis moved forward in a spiral in an attempt to achieve a clearer understanding (Ellis, 1998b). The first loop is global and a

start in the analysis. After the first loop, the understanding of the problem changes. Each loop is influenced by the previous loop and represents a return to the data with a different question. My process of coding consisted of collecting, marking, and placing parts of transcripts into categories. I was continually moving transcript excerpts from one topic area to another and noting significant details in the parts of the conversations. Each time I reread the analysis presentation (final version in Chapter 5), I reflected on the categories. As I searched to understand, there were always more questions. For example, where did people see multicultural education? Many people were concerned about their personal cultural group being recognized, but where were these groups and why were they ignored? Why was there a groundswell against distinct outcomes for Aboriginal and Francophone groups? How did the questioning affect those involved in the curriculum development process? How did the questions in turn affect the discourse of the proposed social studies curriculum?

I began the analysis by creating categories for the conversations I had. In the first loop, the draft of topics emerged as:

- Getting Involved
- Initial Perceptions: Inspecting the Foundation
- Upon Reflection: Thinking About the Layout
- Concerns: Problems With the Design
- Discussion of the Process: Feelings About the Plan
- Final Thoughts

Parts of transcripts were then put into the categories. After coding the transcripts and writing the first draft, I had my analysis read by an advisory group. After each coding

and recoding, the analysis presentation was reviewed by me and read by my advisory group. Together we discussed appropriate categorization of the transcript excerpts and what was missing from the clusters. The second loop reorganized the topics as:

- Getting involved
- Regional Identity
- Process
- Final Thoughts

After the descriptors were reorganized into four major topics, the transcript excerpts were placed into the appropriate topic areas. I reread the transcripts for additional excerpts that would fit the topics, and I submitted my draft of major topics to my advisory group. After discussion a third draft emerged that included subtopics. The third loop organized the analysis presentation into:

- Getting Involved
- Regional Identity
- Process
    - Defining Social Studies
    - Issues
    - Questions
- Final Thoughts

In the third loop, the transcript excerpts were reorganized and placed into the new groupings. Some quotations were moved, other quotations removed, and some quotations added from the transcripts to ensure coherence of the topics presented. After the analysis presentation was drafted, it was once again read and discussed by my advisory group.

After the fourth loop the questioning resulted in another reorganization and what turned out to be the final draft of topics and subtopics. The fourth draft described the topics and sub-topics as:

- Getting Involved
- Responses to the Process
    - The Consultation Process: Politics and Collaboration
    - Teacher Involvement at a Focus Group
- Responses to the Document
    - Questioning the Goals of the Document
    - Questioning the Need for Distinct Groups
- The Focus Group Experience
    - The Role of Social Studies
    - The Reality of Teaching Social Studies: In the Classroom
    - Hearing Others' Responses to the *Foundation Document*
    - The Role of Curriculum in Representing Culture
    - Questioning the Need for Distinct Outcomes
        - The Aboriginal Question
        - Spirituality
        - Francophone Involvement
- Final Thoughts

The topics, analysis presentation, and transcripts were read once again with additional quotations added into appropriate topics and subtopics. I outlined the main points of each topic as an introduction to the conversations under that topic. The chapter

summary was written after all topics and introductions were organized. The final draft (Chapter 5), including the summary, was read and discussed with my advisory group.

Writing the Interpretive Account

The interpretation of the data (Chapter 6) was informed by my experiences in social studies, through reading scholarly literature, through insights gained by sharing ideas with colleagues during my graduate course work, and through discussion of my transcripts with others who read written drafts of my work and provided their interpretive feedback. My analysis is one interpretation, an attempt to better understand the meaning of the data. I tried to write a narrative that was congruent with the research questions and the patterns I had discerned in the analysis of the transcripts. In an attempt to come to an understanding of the interviewees' recollections of their participation in the WCP curriculum development process, I have developed the narrative account (Polkinghorne, 1995) within organizing subtopics to highlight a representation of what happened when people responded to the *Foundation Document* and focus group sessions.

Deciding how to use the transcripts and excerpts from the transcripts was a challenging task. It would be impossible to provide a complete representation of everything said by the participants, and I had to decide how to choose what to use. In assembling the narrative, I chose quotations that I thought represented the speaker's place in education, curriculum, and pedagogy that would allow the reader to come to an understanding of the participants' responses. Every rereading of the process leads to a new way of seeing or understanding the process (Boostrom, 1994).

In conducting the study and in writing the interpretive account, I was caught in the tension between principles of interpretive inquiry and the ethics of research practice.

In terms of interpretive inquiry, it would be desirable for participants to be transparent in their situatedness when their comments or views were reported. With regard to ethical practice, I had to preserve the anonymity of participants. As a compromise, I have provided participants' demographic information in aggregate fashion and have only identified their comments as being from "Voice 1", "Voice 2" and so forth.

Conclusion

My analysis and interpretation were my search for understanding, my active construction of knowledge, and not a search for pre-given meaning or an objective truth. Understanding is not static but is in flux and dependent upon our current perspectives. Moving through the spiral of my inquiry in multiple stages allowed me to be open to the text and allowed the text to open itself to me. In moving through the interpretive spiral "there is no proving or disproving but only a certain letting-be-seen" in our understanding (Caputo, 1987, p. 81). The understandings I developed are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

I hope that the reader can come to an understanding of the insights I acquired while not having to totally agree with them. I wanted to present my analysis in a way that opens meaning and allows understanding but does not present a defined metanarrative on the curriculum development process.

CHAPTER 5

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR CULTURAL PLURALISM

Prologue

This chapter is based on my journey of finding people who were involved with or responded to the April 1999 *Draft Foundation Document* for the development of the Western Canadian Protocol Social Studies K-12 Common Curriculum Framework and engaging them in conversations to learn their perspectives on the document and the response experience. My journey followed the adventures of people with different experiences who were involved in the social studies curriculum development process in different ways and for different reasons. My journey covered miles and took me to interesting people in interesting places.

> In May and June 1999, Alberta Learning conducted a series of province-wide consultation forums to provide input into a review of the draft Foundation Document for the development of the Western Canadian Protocol (WCP) Social Studies K-12 Common Curriculum Framework. It is important for Alberta Learning, early in the development process, to have the input of social studies teachers, parents, students, administrators and representatives of universities, professional education organizations, aboriginal organizations, Francophone organizations and the community. A total of 16 consultation forums were held (1 Francophone), and approximately 550 individuals attended. (Alberta Learning, 1999, p. 3)

As a social studies teacher and a graduate student focusing on curriculum development, I was one of the 550 people who attended one of the 16 consultation forums to provide input into a review of the *Foundation Document* for the development of the WCP Social Studies K-12 Common Curriculum Framework. The social studies curriculum was due for a change, and with all the changes that had happened politically

in the world over the duration of the "old" curriculum, I wanted to be involved in what I thought would be an interesting and exciting project. I also wanted to understand how the curriculum provided to schools comes to be what it is. My doctoral research was intended to critically engage with an early and important component of a curriculum development and implementation process.

The first opportunity most people had to become involved in the new social studies curriculum in Alberta was when the April 1999 draft *Foundation Document* was made public. My initial research plan had been to conduct a discourse analysis of the *Foundation Document*. As part of my preparation for this interpretive work, I interviewed a number of people in Alberta who either attended a consultation forum or were otherwise involved in the Western Canadian Protocol social studies curriculum development process. (The scope and history of this process have been outlined in Chapter 4.) This chapter highlights the views of the people interviewed.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1964) defined foundation as a "body or ground on which other parts are overlaid; underlying principle" (p. 482). The *Foundation Document* can similarly be understood as both the underlying principle and the base for the framework which will establish the structure and overall appearance of the eventual K-12 social studies curriculum in Alberta.

When extrapolating from the *Foundation Document* to anticipate how the framework will develop and how the finished project will look, people will have different interpretations depending upon their perspectives. Their perceptions will be governed by commonsense ideas and values which are grounded in their way of life, which are shaped

by the nature of their localities and work site histories (J. Ellis, personal communication, 2001).

To identify possible participants for interviews, I developed a list of people who were familiar with and had been involved in some manner with the *Foundation Document*. Through my initial interviews and in discussing my research with other people in education, I learned of additional people to add to the list of prospective interviewees. I interviewed 13 people who had attended a focus group or had otherwise submitted a critique of the *Foundation Document*.

The people interviewed covered a wide range of areas in education. Francophone and Aboriginal people were included in the interviews. Other participants included an Alberta Learning employee, *Foundation Document* steering committee members, teachers with a range of experience from Grades 1-12 and adult education, university professors, graduate students, school district curriculum specialists, school-based administrators, an ATA representative, a member of the WCP group that developed the *Foundation Document*, and a member of a nonprofit foundation that attempts to influence social studies education. Some people viewed the *Foundation Document* from a perspective that was based upon several influences; for example, a Francophone high school teacher or a primary (Grades 1-3) generalist teacher who was also a graduate student. To preserve the anonymity of participants, each one is identified in this chapter as only a numbered voice: for example, Voice 1. Each person was randomly assigned a voice number and retains the same number throughout the chapter. Not everyone spoke about all topics, and therefore all voices are not present within each topic or subtopic.

In the beginning of the interviews I sought to gain an understanding of people's perspectives by learning their past and present roles in education. I wanted to consider their place in everyday life. People's input and contributions to the WCP social studies process started at different times. When they reflected upon their personal contributions, they did so from different places. One person interviewed belonged to the Western Canadian Protocol (1999) group who initiated the social studies *Foundation Document.* Other people tried to join or influence the process along the way. Yet other educators, in tune with Alberta Learning or the social studies process, were waiting for the first draft of the *Foundation Document* to be released. Many people were invited to join the process at the consultation forum stage. With Alberta Learning trying to keep an open process, people were able to contribute after the consultation forums were complete. There were many avenues that people accessed to provide input into the WCP social studies curriculum development process.

In the interviews, conversation starters were used to facilitate discussion about the *Foundation Document.* Questions or statements such as "What was your involvement with the WCP social studies (April 1999 draft) *Foundation Document*?" and "Did the *Foundation Document* or your participation in a focus group raise any questions for you?" were used to start the conversation. The participants' responses varied and often led the conversation to topics most salient for them. Their responses offered their views of the *Foundation Document* in relation to the concerns, aspirations, values, or tensions of their localities, work sites, or intellectual neighbourhoods.

By entering into these conversations, I wanted to hear people's experiences in the WCP social studies development process. I wanted to know what the document meant to

them. I wanted to hear people's voices. People's voices would reflect their experience and life journeys in relation to their understandings of the *Foundation Document*. The focus group forums in which they had participated were designed to listen to people; I wanted to hear what it was like for them to be there. I was interested in both the *Foundation Document* and the response forum process, and I hoped that the interviews would afford multiple worldviews related to the *Foundation Document* and the response process. In accessing the multiple perspectives informing the foundation stage in this curriculum development process, I expected to encounter wide-ranging and rich points of view from people experienced in different areas of education.

Participants' commonsense discussions of the *Foundation Document*, response forums, or the process as a whole contained interpretive and explanatory stratagems because these are built into language itself. Many of these stratagems took the form of metaphor. When discussing the *Foundation Document*, for example, several people used cooking metaphors such as "Can you actually put these ingredients together?" "Ask the cook," "They thought it was overdone," and "if you've been at the table." Other people used construction metaphors such as "Fix things up," "trying to build," and "the structure they were starting to put forward." Diverse metaphors were employed in interpretive or judgmental statements such as "This proposal was not going to fly," "We were being taught a lesson," and "Somebody is just going to pull the plug." The interpretive metaphors and ideas they communicated reflected the commonsense views emanating from the "everyday lives" of the participants (Eyles, 1989). Thus participants' statements say as much about their everyday lives and the places of their everyday lives as they do about the *Foundation Document* and social studies curriculum development process.

Recognizing this means recognizing that one is in fact hearing the "voices" of the participants rather than simply listening to their "opinions."

The conversation in education today involves many more people than it did in the past. In this social studies curriculum development process, groups who were not previously invited to the conversation were being allowed to contribute their voices. The opening of curriculum development in Alberta through the WCP social studies project allowed new or different perspectives to be brought forward. Perspectives are influenced by the multiple experiences that people have had throughout their lives and careers, and these experiences have been shaped by the places in which they have lived and worked, given that identities and places are mutually constituted (Eyles, 1989; Pratt, 1998). The presentation of participants' voices in this chapter is intended to provide access to the multiple perspectives endeavouring to inform the development of the new social studies curriculum.

The voices are presented within topics and subtopics that I identified in analyses of the transcripts of interviews. Quotations were selected to give voice to the feelings, emotions, and understandings that people expressed about the *Foundation Document* and feedback forum process. Only portions of each transcript were used. When a discussion wandered, parts were omitted; and when the discussion returned to the topic, the quotation was continued. As the narrator I offer commentaries to introduce each topic.

This chapter is intended to serve as a window into some of the multiple realities and perspectives affecting and/or affected by a new social studies curriculum development. Rather than attempting to offer a rigorous explanation or highly structured theory about these curriculum development events, it is hoped that the presentation of

these voices will enable readers to understand this curriculum development process, in all of its ambiguity and complexity, a little better.

In the quotations the interviewees referred to three or four groups being talked about in the *Foundation Document*. A reference to four groups corresponds with Alberta Learning's groupings of Aboriginal, Francophone, English language, and other multicultural groups. Many of the people interviewed referred to three groups. Quite often during our conversations the "English language" and other "multicultural" groups were considered as one group.

The following are the topics and subtopics within which the voices are presented:

- Getting Involved
- Responses to the Process
    - The Consultation Process: Politics and Collaboration
    - Teacher Involvement at a Focus Group
- Responses to the Document
    - Questioning the Goals of the Document
    - Questioning the Need for Distinct Groups
- The Focus Group Experience
    - The Role of Social Studies
    - The Reality of Teaching Social Studies: In the Classroom
    - Hearing Others' Responses to the *Foundation Document*
    - The Role of Curriculum in Representing Culture

- Questioning the Need for Distinct Outcomes
  - The Aboriginal Question
  - Spirituality
  - Francophone Involvement
- Final Thoughts

Getting Involved

The people interviewed were all involved with the *Foundation Document* but took different routes to be involved. Some people were invited because their knowledge and expertise were recognized. They were invited by the Western Canadian Protocol group to help write the WCP *Foundation Document* or were invited by Alberta Learning to be on the Alberta Learning committee to critique and fine-tune the *Foundation Document* for public release. Others were recognized at the district level for their social studies expertise and were asked by their school district to participate in a focus group session. Other people got involved in attending a focus group session or in writing a response to the *Foundation Document* through their own initiative and personal interest. Most of the people interviewed entered the WCP social studies curriculum development process excited and eager to let their voices contribute to the conversation or to influence the direction of a curriculum development project. These descriptions or explanations of how people came to participate in responding to the WCP social studies April 1999 *Draft Foundation Document* are provided here to give some context to their comments, which are presented in the following subsections.

Voice 2

[My involvement began] at the onset when we were brought together. There were three distinct groups, the Aboriginal, the Francophone, and the—I'm not exactly sure what you would call them—Anglophones, I guess. We were invited to bring together our own philosophy and vision toward how we saw this document would look like. So the first meeting, that's what we came with, and then we broke off into groups so that we had a general framework of where we were headed for this particular project. We met on a monthly basis. We travelled to the different provinces, to their home bases in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, and the Territories and the Yukon. We rotated visitations and worked on several components of this document, one component being the vision statement, another being the goals; looking at general kinds of guidelines and developing a framework (foundation) as an initial step.

Voice 4

My organization as a "not-for-profit" citizenship education organization wanted to, and I wanted the organization to, take the opportunity to try and influence the direction of this protocol from the very beginning. So, knowing that it was coming along, our organization started a couple of years before the protocol, before this [foundation] document. We commissioned a substantive document to be put forward to the ministers of education to pass onto their representatives on the protocol as a means of saying, "Hey, citizenship education is important and should be important within the document, and here's some of the things and ways in which we think citizenship education should be taught." So we tried to take a leading role in this.

Voice 5

I didn't have much of an involvement with the [foundation] document itself. I tried to get involved with the process because they started working on this just as I started my master's, and I knew it was something. I was doing curriculum development, and I saw it as a potential opportunity for me. They had focus groups that came across Alberta, and I was invited as one of the members of our [school] board, mostly because our supervisor of social studies here knew I was interested in this, and so [he] asked if I would go and represent our school system.

Voice 6

I was on the Advisory Committee. I was first approached at a curriculum symposium. I [wanted] to get more information for my role as a curriculum coordinator and through that contact, and when they were trying to form the Advisory Committee, [they] phoned me. I joined as a curriculum and resource person as a member of the Advisory Committee.

Voice 7

> This document came to the schools and we read through, and then they said, "Who wants to have some input? Who wants to go to one of these focus meetings?" Basically it was those people who had been on committees before, people [who] remembered what the system had been like and had longitudinal experience. We picked people who taught junior high and high school and had been around for awhile. A lot of people had been through previous curriculum changes [and] could remember the biggies and the fights over the biggies and knew how that process worked.

Voice 8

> I attended a focus group as a representative of my system. I didn't get the document ahead of time. I think I might have got it the day before, but no more than that.

Voice 9

> I didn't really have anything to do with the [foundation] document. I was just there [in the focus group] to study the document.

Voice 10

> I had no involvement, really. I only saw it when it came out, the first draft. I wasn't asked to respond by them [Alberta Learning]. I didn't attend the workshop [focus group] here. I was asked to respond to it [the *Foundation Document*]. The ATA was putting together a document for a response. I contributed to that response but didn't write an individual one. So that's really been my only involvement with it. . . . As I recall, they asked a number of people to give a response. I don't remember how I got the document. It's odd. I've never been asked to be involved by the people putting it together.

Voice 11

> I just came on as a replacement in the summer of 1999 for four forums—four in Calgary and one in Edmonton. I ended up on the working committee in the fall, last December [1999].

Responses to the Process

Alberta Learning took the lead in the WCP (1999) social studies project and held consultation forums to get feedback to the social studies *Foundation Document*. People interested in education from many different viewpoints became involved in the *Foundation Document* consultation process. Many of the people were teachers, but their education, experience, and current career fields were very diverse. People entered into this curriculum development project with their personal experiences influencing their understanding of the topics and curriculum development process. There were many different recollections of the focus group experience. In my conversations with people who attended a focus group session, their retelling of the experience described different perspectives and recollections. Many people said that they entered into the curriculum development process full of interest in making a contribution, but it did not turn out the way they thought it would. By listening to the voices, the reader can discern where people had concerns and how far they were able to journey through the *Foundation Document* process. The voices give insight into the areas that became focal points, and this is reflected in the groupings of the subtopics.

The Consultation Process: Politics and Collaboration

Voice 1

> When it was clear that—especially in Alberta, more so than in other jurisdictions—there really was a strong response from teachers, and the document was revised substantially subsequent to the consultation of teachers. I changed my opinion a bit about the consultation process and the effect it really had on policy makers.

Voice 2

> My understanding is, via the network grapevine, that Alberta may be pulling out of this. I heard they are pulling out because of the resistance to the Aboriginal piece. Just that statement says it alone, that despite the work of three distinct groups working together and hammering it out—and there were a lot of tears through this—that the government and its officials find it offensive that Aboriginal people have a say.

Voice 3

> One of the things I missed in some ways was the fact the document represented a process, that having the outcomes laid out that way in the document was part of the process. It was almost a natural product of the way the ministry working group had been structured. So in some ways I think the way the *Foundation Document* was released the first time was an attempt to represent that process and so, in some ways, having the distinctive outcomes at the beginning of the process was kind of a natural thing to do. We had to draw them out first before the committee could put them back in a more integrated fashion. . . . That's my feeling about it.
>
> It was like a journey, like a process of bringing the Aboriginal and Francophone people out. There had been an exclusion of those stakeholders in the curriculum development process previously. They are very protective of and aggressive in terms of wanting their interests to be put on the table. I guess the hope is that as you move forward you start to build something that is really inclusive. That generates a response that says, "We are in here; we are reflected in this; we don't have to be separated out. We are already reflected in the whole document."
>
> The *Foundation Document* represents not just content, but it represents process. I really think they had to do this step before they can go back and restructure in a way that is more acceptable. This is really an evolving thing. We are breaking new ground; everything is new. We are not used to hearing about negative kinds of connotations associated with citizenship because of experiences with residential schools and because of experiences of being torn away from family members. That part is a really profound kind of process.

Voice 4

> [The organization of the *Foundation Document*] was not a very politically astute way of doing things. Maybe they didn't understand or realize, or maybe it was the Francophones and Aboriginals on there that said, "We don't give a damn; we want to be prominent in here. This is where we belong." The in-fighting—I don't know if in-fighting is the word, but the conversations and discussions, the debate

that must have gone around on this, to get it this far, would have been very, very tough.

To me the whole procedure has been, particularly for a social studies document, quite secretive, quite slow in the process. . . . It hasn't been an open process. So in the sense that it has been top-down in the fact that there hasn't been a continual involvement of teachers in the field in reacting to the document, the document itself hasn't been top-down. The process within the process has been very open and very slow because they are attempting to bring Aboriginals, Francophones, and mainstream perspectives together, four provinces and now three provinces and the territories, so it's been a very interesting and open process, but only if you've been at the table. If you haven't been at the table it's been, except for this document and reaction to it, it's been a very closed process, even to the point of releasing very little information, never mind asking reaction, but the information has been very slow coming out.

Voice 5

I think it started top-down in that they didn't want any kind of help. Truly I tried to get involved but couldn't. But I think because of the outpouring—I mean there was a lot of outpouring of feedback on this as a result of those focus groups. You have to give them credit. I think they started listening to those focus groups. They heard people, what they were saying, and the ATA took a strong stand on it and university professors took a strong stand. You have to give those people credit that they had a lot tied into this already and they were still open to listening. . . . They've made some effort to come out and talk to people who are interested.

Voice 6

I see it as a collaborative sharing. We had so many opportunities for people to participate, and I think that is one of the frustrations I find in my job. We hear from so many teachers, and they are still holding a view of this coming from the top down, coming from central office, or it's coming from Alberta Learning: "What are they making us do now?" The people don't realize how many opportunities they had to provide input. Our small committee had an effect in providing input. Watching things change in front of my eyes, as far as the next draft went, made me realize that, yes, we did have a lot of input. I've really seen the program from Alberta Learning—the program manager, etc.—really making an effort to listen and to make changes. In some cases you see where the hands are tied politically. I don't think it was a grassroots change, and I don't know if it ever can be for a change in curriculum.

Voice 7

Teachers are not involved in this.

Voice 8

> The bottom line is, we are ruled by a political agenda, and also we are ruled on a political timeline, and part of that deals with money.

Voice 10

> It's always the same, from what I can tell. So even though they say its open, I don't know how open it really is. It seems like they've asked certain people to respond. They say the teaching profession is involved, but it seems at a much more restricted level than the experiences we had in the 1980s with curriculum change.

Teacher Involvement at a Focus Group

Voice 1

> At the focus group almost all of us had read the document beforehand. It was a chance for us to express our reservations about what was in the document—quite vocally, quite forcefully. There were a lot of people who spoke to the Alberta personnel who were there, and others in the department, about their reservations, about the whole process, about how it developed, the reservations about whether it actually fit with the curriculum and the classroom realities it is based on. The focus group ended up channeling a lot of dissatisfaction toward Alberta Learning and ultimately toward the design process. It seemed that it talked about a reality we didn't see and a purpose of social studies that we didn't necessarily accept.

Voice 5

> They got us to sit down and asked us to address the needs of a student in 2040 or 2030. What are the types of skills we hope to get or what would we like a kid to look like after they had gone through the social studies program? Then we were given the document and asked to peruse it and to see if our beliefs, the things we wanted to see in the future, were in fact incorporated into the document. We had been preset to look for exactly what we had said.

Responses to the Document

The *Foundation Document* was the initial outline that was to be used to guide the building of the framework for the new social studies curriculum. Alberta Learning held focus groups for people to discuss the *Foundation Document*. Many issues arose out of what was in the document. The issues of citizenship and cultural identity were emotional issues for many of the people who read the *Foundation Document* and responded to it at a focus group session. People questioned how we define culture, how we can place the importance of one culture over another, and how we teach culture. Addressing the injustices of the past and treating all cultures equally were discussion items that arose from parts of the *Foundation Document*. In discussing the *Foundation Document* during my interviews, contradictions in what people were saying became apparent. In general, abstract discussions about the *Foundation Document*, many of the participants agreed that we need to address the specific needs of Aboriginal people and, to a lesser extent, Francophone people. In discussions of the document contents, some people questioned the need for distinct outcomes and a *Foundation Document* that was split into three main groups—Aboriginal, Francophone, and what most people perceived as everyone else in the "other" grouping. Some people from identifiable or ethnic groups outside the Aboriginal and Francophone communities questioned the gathering of all the other groups into one "other" category. They felt that it masked the distinctness among the groups within "non-Aboriginal, non-Francophone cultural communities." Many people felt that individual ethnicity and specific histories would become lost. Many of the voices questioned the possibilities of a unifying curriculum that teachers could accept and teach in their classroom that would allow students to examine their personal identity as well as

others' and be comfortable in the knowledge they were learning. The following subtopics reflect the recurring topics in our conversations and how these might translate into classroom practices.

Questioning the Goals of the Document

Voice 1

> I was really looking at what goals were reflected in the document, the kind of discourse that was used, the perception that was presented of what social studies was, and the purpose of social studies. I didn't just look at it as a document that I would be implementing. I did have a purely technical approach to the discourse. It was more of an intellectual approach than anything.

Voice 3

> The Aboriginal and Francophone perspective seemed to be described in terms of language and culture, and I thought that was a fairly limiting description as an organizing principle. We could talk about it in terms of identity. There are other aspects of identity that contribute other than just language and culture.
>
> The Aboriginal people there and the Francophones and their perspectives on citizenship were really powerful and emotional to listen to. It was very humbling to listen to those kinds of emotions and the struggle they have had to be heard.
>
> I think my concerns about the *Foundation Document* rested more with some parts of it that I felt needed to be more explicitly discussed. I thought the process needed to be more explicitly discussed, that there needed to be a discussion of diversity and inclusion and the struggles with that as it was represented by the makeup of that working group. I also thought that it needed to be focused a bit more strongly on the citizenship aspect too. Again, a more explicit discussion.
>
> Those are some of the things I thought needed to be [addressed]. Kind of a feeling that the process of involving all three groups from the beginning needed to be more explicitly discussed in the *Foundation Document*. There wasn't enough of trying to build that understanding and that by the very fact that they were included did meet the goals of working toward a more inclusive kind of curriculum development process.

Voice 11

> Terminology is one of the things we discussed because there was terminology in the English language that doesn't fit in the Francophone and the First Nations languages. Translation from a First Nations language or a Francophone language to English doesn't sound right.

Questioning the Need for Distinct Groups

Voice 2

> I believe the [*Foundation Document* had promise], and the reason why is because the current curriculum that is offered gives the teaching of one predominant culture. It does not allow the student to expand their knowledge and wisdom and learning to who they are as a person, as a people, and regardless of who they are, whether they are Aboriginal or whatever culture they come from. From our belief and philosophy, we need to know who we are first and foremost and being able to feel comfortable and proud about who you are. If you are not learning that in school or it is underlying, permeated into the curriculum that they are subservient to a main culture, then that is how they act and behave. It's like a new generation of residential schools, only it is now in institutions that are public.

Voice 3

> One of the things that came out of the first release of the document was the controversy over the way the outcomes were laid out. It was really interesting to listen to people reacting to those outcomes. It seemed to be almost like a line drawn where people would say we can't have distinctive outcomes because it goes against trying to communicate a more inclusive view. And other people would say, "Well, yeah, we need to have distinctive outcomes because we need to address the unique needs of the groups such as the Aboriginal and Francophone groups."

Voice 4

> What actually bothered me was in the focus group, where the social studies teachers in the room couldn't get away from talking about [distinct outcomes]. It usurped the conversation for an hour and a half or so. "Why do we have this?" "Why do we need to separate the Aboriginals and Francophones out? We are all in this together." Or "Why don't we have—? I teach in a rural area where there are a lot of Hungarians, and we don't have Hungarians in here; why do we have Francophones?" That surprised me quite a bit because I thought social studies teachers would take a more broad perspective of the document. So my initial

reaction was one of maybe they kind of blew it in the way that they red-flagged this. And, while it may be important and necessary for the Aboriginals and Francophones to be involved in this from the very beginning, it is a very innovative way of looking at it. The way the document was written did not do anything to pacify people who might have seen this as a negative. The main problem, as I said, becomes one of that nobody talks about anything else. That is basically what was talked about in the room. . . . We didn't talk about the outcomes; we didn't talk about the true social studies nature of this document; we talked about the fact how come the Aboriginals are in there and how come the Francophones are in there.

Voice 5

Why do you separate the two groups out and not the Ukrainians, the Hungarians, the Spanish, the Japanese, the Chinese? It's that same debate that goes on across Canada between Anglophones and Francophones, distinctness of the Francophone, distinctness of the Aboriginal, distinctness of everyone else. And that is where people have a hard time with that. There seems to be a question you have to ask and answer first and that is, if you buy into this inclusiveness and you bring the Aboriginals and the Francophones into this, the document and the curriculum, how do you sell it to teachers? How do you get them to buy into it? It's almost like you are doing a mini Charlottetown Accord.

Voice 8

The French get to build; Aboriginals get to live and renew. I didn't see anywhere there where it talked about me celebrating and being part of a dynamic community.

Voice 11

I found it very confusing because I looked at it as a core document for all students in Alberta. That's my focus even though I am an Aboriginal content specialist. That's my focus. When I look at this I say, "Do all students see themselves?" You could see that there were some just for Aboriginal students; some were just for the Francophone students. I said, "How are you going to do this?" I found it confusing, and so did the people out in the field. They said, "What's this business with distinctive outcomes?" Instead of evaluating the document totally, they focused on interest groups. "Why are the interest groups in here?" And "Why are there only two interest groups?" A woman that I know—she's an elderly woman—said, "Where are the Scottish people?" So it's exciting, but it's also different, different for my people.

The Focus Group Experience

Alberta was the only jurisdiction to invite feedback from large groups of people. There were 16 focus groups held throughout the province, and people came together at focus groups to discuss the *Foundation Document* and participate in the development of a new curriculum. The focus group sessions gave people an opportunity to voice their concerns to Alberta Learning. There were small- and large-group sharing activities during the focus group sessions. The small groups were mixed, and often the people in a small group did not know the others in their group very well. This made the dynamics within the group for discussing sensitive subjects more difficult. During my interviews, several of the people expressed the view that there appeared to be some discomfort from people in their group wanting to state their views but not wanting to appear to sound negative. During the focus group sessions, conversations occasionally wandered to other topics, including the role of social studies and issues in curriculum. Some topics related more specifically to the reality of teaching in the classroom and teachers' concerns associated with this. The following subtopics were identified during conversations with people who recalled what was talked about during their focus group session.

The Role of Social Studies

Voice 1

> The definition, the vision, the role of social studies certainly caused less discussion and difficulty than the decision to orient social studies around four pools of identity. It is very difficult to take issue with documents that talk about the inquiry process and proposed social action as one of the main components of social studies, because that's what most of us have been teaching in our classrooms. It fits well with our practices across jurisdictions.

Voice 3

> So the reaction to it was a reaction that you could categorize into two camps: "Yes, this is good because we need to address these," or "Oh God, no, we can't because it doesn't communicate an inclusive kind of view."

Voice 4

> I was quite pleased with where [citizenship] was prominently displayed. That was my first reaction and my strongest reaction to it. I also reacted to the Aboriginal and Francophone components of the document and understanding why and accepting why they were there. It didn't bother me.

Voice 6

> I think a lot of my initial reactions to the Native situation and the Francophone situation were that this is important and it is in the back [of the document] as background. The perspective is really important because we've only been taught a certain history or a certain social studies from a certain perspective. And I think there's more perspectives.

Voice 7

> The way this was formed was wrong. There were other ideas that were right. We sort of said, "Yes, okay" [to] the ideas of citizenship, of government, gender, and culture. We agreed with those divisions and concepts. To some of the practicalities we just said, "No, this is not going to work."
>
> When we look at the old curriculum, we made mistakes. We did the best we could at the time. Things have changed drastically in Canada, different groups and different attitudes. There's been a major shift in the way people think. We know a lot more about how to teach kids. . . . In twenty years we haven't remained static. The stuff the '84/'85 curriculum was based on is wrong. Well, this [proposed] curriculum does address that; the present curriculum doesn't address that. There was logical reasoning for it, and it fit with our thinking. We just didn't know.
>
> I remember one thing that someone said about the role of social studies, and it came out a couple of times in our group. There is nothing here about academic rigor. That was missing. It was huge! We weren't sure. Was it an error by omission or co-mission?

Voice 9

> I taught on an Indian reserve for a while. I always thought there was certainly a lack of Native history at that point. Here I was teaching a Grade 7 class and teaching Greek civilization, the Olympics and that sort of thing and I thought, "When do they ever deal with their history?"

Voice 10

> I guess the main concern I had was the way it took up difference—cultural difference. I thought it was really wanting in that respect. It's kind of a complex thing. On the one hand I'm sympathetic to the need to take up Aboriginal education. It's often been neglected in social studies and in education in general.
>
> I don't think that in terms of the definition of social studies and how it's conceptualized that they've really taken some of the more recent, broader work in cultural studies or postmodernism in terms of trying to understand how we might understand social studies issues and the nature of knowledge and some of those epistemological questions.

The Reality of Teaching Social Studies – In the classroom

Voice 1

> Any time you deal with a broad-based consultation process, a whole range of messages is going to come back to you, a whole range of responses, and in terms of curricular planning. I think its important to listen to all those responses, even the ones that don't seem to fit. They are telling you something about classroom conditions, about teachers and their perceptions about what's happening. It's telling Alberta Learning something about how they perceive the discourse of education. It's important to listen to the dissident voice. It is important to listen to the groundswell that comes up. It establishes conditions under which teachers will feel better about the curriculum, about being consulted in curriculum development, about being able to talk about their specific classroom conditions. They weren't surprised by the reaction they got, and they were sympathetic to the reaction they got. They had the situation themselves, also, within a power discourse on education. They were not in a position of designing for themselves.
>
> The four groups that they talked about were Francophone, First Nations, English language groups, and groups they identified very loosely as multiple cultural perspectives. . . . Classroom teachers felt the divisions were artificial; they were privileging one group over another. They defined social studies in different terms depending on which group was being referred to. For most classroom teachers, that was a problematic approach. . . . They attempted to define something that fit all the characteristics of the four provinces and the two territories. It resulted in something that in certain areas, particularly the areas of

national identity formation and ethnic identity, most classroom teachers felt it wasn't going to apply to their situation. It certainly didn't describe some of the realities of the classrooms of social studies teachers in Alberta.

Voice 5

I don't know how it is going to work. I really see it as being problematic in many ways.

Voice 7

[My initial reactions were] both positive and negative. There were some real misunderstandings when you went to the focus groups and we read through this. Regardless, we didn't understand exactly what they meant by it. People were really angry. People looked at it and said, "No, you can't have and run three different [curricula]."
"Does this work?" It's like reading a recipe for a cookbook. You have this incredible recipe, but you don't ever ask the cook, "Can you do this? Can you actually put these ingredients together in the way that I have described it?" Well, the person could say, "Theoretically, yes, but in all practicality, no." Sort of like Martha Stewart: Martha could do it, but no one else in the world can.
What came out of it was, "Guys, this is not going to fly!" The Natives are beginning to exert political pressures on the government. It's good; that's what Canada is all about. But you still have to keep social justice throughout. You still have to do something that's workable.

Voice 9

I remember that there was a lot of consternation as to what was involved with the focus being placed on Native education, on the Native groups and on the Francophone groups.

Voice 10

I'm particularly sympathetic to First Nation communities who say that they want education, social studies education as a way to build, not just build culture but to cover culture. We were hearing Ovid Mercredi speak at a social studies conference a couple of years ago where he talked about how education should serve to recover, to help them in the recovery of their culture, and also to help them build identity. I am very sympathetic to that. But the problem is, I think, the way that notion of difference gets conceptualized in terms of all learners in western Canada. It doesn't get at the notion of what it means for a kid in Calgary to learn about these people and how could that be taken up in a way that would be

meaningful. There's always a danger then of treating a culture as just another thing that we teach kids without looking at it in terms of relationships.

And I'm not sure what is meant by Francophones in context of the western provinces. . . . There's a question about how it ought to be taken up. There's always a danger that the way it gets put into the curriculum and has implications for how it is put into practice and how it is understood in practice. Also, by identifying two cultures or three, Aboriginal, Francophone, and then whatever [the other culture is], it really ignores the reality of a particular urban community in western Canada. Calgary, for example. When people think of Calgary they think about a middle-class city, but 25% of the population of Calgary is non-White. You go to northeast Calgary and there is incredible cultural diversity in the schools, every nationality imaginable. [There are] children of recent immigrants from Latin America, Asia, you name it; and it is similar in Edmonton. Red Deer is probably less so, but big cities in western Canada are extremely culturally diverse. The document has nothing to say about that.

Hearing Others' Responses to the Foundation Document

Voice 3

Even with the really controversial nature and the really fiery kinds of reactions that we received after the *Foundation Document*, it did evoke a lot of emotional response and discussion around it. There's a raising of awareness in terms of the process of development.

Voice 5

As we went through it, I think what began to bother people the most was the number of times we weren't just talking about difference and how we might accommodate difference, but we were actively identifying different groups and treating them differently. We went from being a group of people that were quite happy, quite excited about being there. I was just watching, and I couldn't get over how angry it was. Here was a potentially very positive group of people that had become very angry, very defensive in a matter of minutes. Why did that happen?

[A] French woman got up and started talking about how the French Canadians were under attack and how we had to protect them. [A] Native lady was similar, and we were being blamed for the way they felt they were being treated, and that's truly how people interpreted that. They became upset with us. We were being taught a lesson, and we didn't particularly appreciate it. I thought back about the document that we teach now, and I started to ask, "Well, how do we address difference, because in the curriculum that we had before the Aboriginals and Francophones felt left out?" So I began to see they had a reason for feeling that way.

Voice 9

> My thoughts were, "Were people viewing this document as I had?" I have to be honest; I hadn't read it in depth. I sort of skimmed it through and got a feel, and I'm thinking, "Am I missing something or is this it? All the work and all the meetings and that's what they come up with?" I was curious to see how everyone was feeling. It substantiated my day there with how I thought pretty much.

Voice 12

> I felt that people were trying to be polite, but I could feel that there were some major concerns. They thought it was overdone.

The Role of Curriculum in Representing Culture

Voice 1

> The document is interesting because what they tried to do is present a curriculum that described regional conditions, that there's a regional characteristic of social studies, there's something that's just western Canada. This is really the first attempt, in some ways, to design a curriculum of regional identity and have it fit the entire jurisdiction. And the fact that it didn't work that well shows how problematic it is, how difficult it is to design something that captures regional identity in a way that everyone could feel it makes sense. I'm not sure whether it says something about a growing regional identity in western Canada or whether it says the people in the four ministries, looking at things like national protocols, that they had to start doing the same thing. Frameworks that attempt to describe the potential of an entire region are really going to be problematic.

Voice 7

> You're going to have an Aboriginal curriculum, a Francophone curriculum, and an English curriculum. All of a sudden the English curriculum people said, "Wait a minute, English is not a unified group. If the Aboriginals can have their own curriculum and the Francophones can have their own curriculum, I beg your pardon?" That was one of the reactions.

Voice 10

> It is highly problematic to have Francophone, Aboriginal, and English and then lump everything into that [English] category. That's one criticism I had of it, that you take up the issue of "How am I to understand cultural difference—in what

complex way?" So kind of two levels. One level would be ignoring the nature of cultural diversity in modern society by lumping everything into an English category. But also, to even talk about Aboriginal culture is problematic, I think.

An interesting thing that some people are now taking up is this whole notion of understanding whiteness as an identity, and how kids understand being White carries with it certain kinds of cultural, historical privileges, positions, and how that has to be defined in terms of one's relationship to others. I didn't find that in the document at all, what I would call the newer ways of understanding cultural diversity and how that might be taken up. I would say that was probably the main problem I had with the [*Foundation Document*]. Even that notion that culture becomes a thing, so your involvement in Native culture, understanding Native culture, becomes being able to make a headdress or a dream catcher or a model of a tipi, which freezes an understanding of what Native culture is rather than trying to understand it in terms of how these people live in Calgary, how do they interact, what are their lives like today, what is it like to eat with them. There are all kinds of things which could be taken up in much more relational ways.

Voice 13

I really liked the idea, the idea of including Aboriginal and Francophone education with the mainstream dominant culture theme. I thought it fit in with some of the official government programs like multiculturalism. I liked the inclusive nature of it. Canada's always been a fragmented society and fragmented cultures where we shouldn't be a country technically. We are separated by our geography, where most countries are united by it. We are separated by our culture, where other countries are united by it. The boundaries are north and south, so we have had to make a virtue of differences and thus, again, some of the programs like multiculturalism, equalization payments between provinces, the federal system of government and so on. I thought this idea fit in. In terms of cultural conflict it would help to give a wider, broader understanding of different cultures and different points of view and perhaps serve to alleviate some of the misunderstandings of the different cultures in Canada.

One of the fundamental problems was the ATA, the Social Studies Council, and individual teachers, was the idea that they see [the people] in the WCP as trying to create and preserve a culture through the educational curriculum. They are saying, "No, you can't teach a culture; it has to be there." The other problem is that [we] talk as if there is one Aboriginal culture, but there are six or seven language groups who are traditional enemies. They don't have the same culture; they are all different. Francophones from the Maritimes, Francophones from Quebec, Francophones from Alberta, Métis Francophones are all different from each other. How can we get a common thread for all of these different groups? Language as well as culture and, importantly, the Aboriginal voice really emphasizes the communion of nature, the closeness to nature, the tie to the land; but many critics see this as original culture. They say, "When I see a kid today, he doesn't have a particular tie to the land. His culture is gone." Just by teaching it is not going to take it back to the kid.

I think I learned a lot about how the differences, which I knew theoretically but didn't know practically, how the differences in culture are reflected in language and lead to misunderstandings. The other thing that I hadn't considered carefully that came out in the criticism was the ATA criticism that you can't re-create or build a culture by changing a curriculum in social studies. I thought at the time when I heard that that I should have thought of that, I know that, but what the hell, it's worth a try. Perhaps you can do it in conjunction with other cultural preservation efforts. I think it's important to preserve the individual cultures of Canada.

Questioning the Need for Distinct Outcomes

The Aboriginal Question

Voice 2

My thoughts are in that document as one mind kind of focus, from the Aboriginal perspective. I think my understanding of the focus group was to get reaction to this draft *Foundation Document*. I had read in an article coming out of Calgary specifically that they were not pleased with the Aboriginal perspective to this document. My assumption is that the general public felt there was too much emphasis on that. It should have been generally focused toward the majority culture, the majority people. My own personal reaction is knowing how Alberta is, that this province is truly a redneck province. Because of that, opportunities for change, to better highlight, to bring forth the Aboriginal perspective are not welcomed. . . . Through the development of this, through the focus, through getting feedback, that's my general perception. I feel that, generally speaking, the general population don't think or feel that Aboriginal people have a voice or that they have a mind to even think.

The fear is still there, not knowing or unwilling to understand based on their own beliefs and philosophies that their way is the only way and that the Aboriginal people need to follow their way if they are going to be successful. To go further to that is if they did follow that way and they have, whether by course or voluntarily, looked at success in terms of education and what the education system stands for, our people have not succeeded.

Voice 9

I realized my limited knowledge of the Native contribution and their situation prior to our arrival and what transpired during the arrival of the Western influence or the European influence.

Voice 10

> To talk about Aboriginal culture is problematic. . . . Within that is incredible linguistic and cultural diversity.

Voice 12

> I think the big one that I found was, it was such a strong Aboriginal voice. It was such an overwhelming Aboriginal push or focus. [I was] thinking about the four or five thousand teachers that I represent, thinking this doesn't apply to most of us. I wondered how they would accept a document such as this with such a heavy emphasis, knowing that we must be tolerant and understanding and so on.

Spirituality

Voice 2

> One of the components in this *Foundation Document* that puts its struggle in its development, a struggle when people were receiving feedback, was the concept of spirituality. I think that was a very contentious issue—that people not understanding what spirituality was felt it to be a threat. It was like taking ourselves back 200 years when you talk about the federal government and the missionaries who in their fear of the unknown chased us off into the bush, our forefathers. It's the same thing.
>
> [People] not understanding what spirituality is indicates a number of issues. Those issues are that the education system is not preparing educators to understand about Aboriginal people, and so it questions the kind of curriculum, the kind of educator that is going out there. Our teachers are not prepared to teach the curriculum specific to Aboriginal people; nor are they prepared to teach Aboriginal children because the institutions do not prepare them adequately. In this project, as an Aboriginal group, we faced a lot of stress trying to make our point about spirituality. They had a hard time trying to understand that because their perception is God and church. That's not what it is, and there was a resistance, not wanting to learn it or not understanding it. So if this little group does it, can you imagine what the rest of Alberta is feeling?

Voice 11

> This is my own personal thing, but what's happening with the word *spirituality* now? If you look at the *Edmonton Journal* on a Sunday morning, the word spirituality is used by all Christian religions and is equated to religion. In the First Nations culture it is more like a worldview. It is not a religion. It is the way we live. So I was banging my head up against a wall. It's a kind of worldview, but

> it's not worldview. . . . We want a word we can use that is not equated to religion, because it is a way of life from the time you get up until you go to bed, from the time you are born until the time you die. You could say that's religion, but it's intertwined with every part of your day, the way you treat people. People might argue that that's religion; but no, it's not religion.

Francophone Involvement

Voice 4

> Why do we have Francophones?

Voice 5

> My very first look I was concerned about the kinds of things it said about difference and about how we were going to treat different cultural groups. . . . My question was, "How are we treating the difference here? Are we making it easier for French Canadians to be French Canadians in our society, or are we isolating them even more? Are we making them more 'others'?" How was I going to do this? You would have to be a French-speaking Métis to teach this curriculum.

Voice 9

> I realized how little we generally know about the French fact in Alberta, and although I thought perhaps it was overdone, my initial reaction was, "Gee, people don't know the role French Canadian people played in the development of Alberta, in the development of the west." . . . What comes to mind is if someone is involved, if you had a pressure group that is involved in establishing a curriculum, it could certainly guide it the way they want to.

Voice 10

> I'm not sure what is meant by Francophones in context of the Western provinces.

Final Thoughts

Participants at focus group sessions and those who contributed directly to the development of the *Foundation Document* had strong convictions about their vision of a new social studies curriculum. Although there were some similar concerns, there were

also concerns that were unique to each individual. A question that arises is, "Can a Western regional curriculum be developed if people are unable to come to a common understanding of social studies or a common understanding of language?" Questions were raised by the people reading and discussing the *Foundation Document*. Following are the closing reflections of some of the people interviewed.

Voice 2

> You need to feel comfortable and proud about who you are, and if you are not learning that in school or it is permeated into the curriculum that you are subservient to a main culture, then that is how you act and behave. It is like a new generation of residential schools, only now it is institutions that are public.

Voice 5

> Another question was, "Are we creating more 'otherness'?" Are we, in attempting to listen to other voices, are we further ostracizing them, placing them outside? . . . I don't know how it is going to work. I really see it as being problematic in many ways. If you are taking at a postmodern look at the *Foundation Document*, perhaps it is a good start to listen to a couple other voices that you haven't addressed before. But in listening to those voices, then you are ostracizing other voices as well. So I started to look at how we might address the curriculum in such a way that we learn about all sorts of different groups.

Voice 7

> It doesn't matter if you are a principal or anybody; it just ain't going to work. And what I found out is, the outside groups don't understand exactly what we are going through. They understand schools, but they don't understand the process at all. And that's part of the problem too.

Voice 10

> Citizenship, diversity, globalization; Education hasn't taken enough new ways of thinking about knowledge. The nature of knowledge, how we understand social studies learning and what it might be, has not been sufficiently addressed, I don't think.

Voice 13

I learned a lot about how differences in culture are reflected in language and can lead to misunderstandings.

Summary

Through analyses of the interview transcripts I endeavoured to acquire a clearer sense of the perspectives the interviewees had brought to this experience of a curriculum development process. Each person's perspective had been developed in a different collection of localities. In hearing their "voices" in these transcripts, I was hearing what was meaningful to them in their localities—in the places of their everyday lives. In the interviews, participants told stories of how they responded to the *Foundation Document* and what they observed or experienced in the focus group response forums. In reading and rereading the transcripts of the interviews, I discerned the confusion, ambiguities, and difficulties or frustrations that were expressed by participants in our discussions.

Read (or heard) collectively, participants' comments underscored the challenge of both the process and content of this curriculum development process. In terms of process, their comments made apparent the inherent difficulty of undertaking a curriculum development process that was intended to be open and not top-down. A number of participants questioned how the *Foundation Document* philosophy fit in with their personal philosophies. So does/should curriculum lead, follow, or wait for change in philosophy on the part of all stakeholders, particularly teachers? What is the nature of anticipated contributions from stakeholders who are not currently on the same page philosophically as the authors of a first draft? Some participants questioned how the ideas in the document could possibly be made to work effectively in their classrooms. They suggested that the *Foundation Document* needed to be more explicitly presented to clarify how the curriculum could be put together and delivered. In other words, they were

reluctant to respond to the general ideas of the document prior to seeing the explicit detail of the completed curriculum development process. Given the ideas expressed in the *Foundation Document* and what many participants could or could not imagine as a final curriculum document, the likelihood of a feasible and philosophically compatible curriculum did not seem promising to a number of them. It is understandable, however, that given participants' responsibilities in their everyday lives, curriculum feasibility and philosophical compatibility in their communities and work sites have to be imaginable before general, abstract ideas guiding a curriculum can be embraced or even responded to. Still, the questions remain: What is the desired or expected contribution of participants to this curriculum development process, and do participants feel that they contributed as they would have wished to?

The second area that resulted in much discussion dealt with culture and multiculturalism. The way the document was written created much of the discussion and led participants to question how a curriculum should deal with culture. Several of the people responded from their personal cultural locality and felt threatened or left out. Some participants commented that people in their group would question where their cultural group was represented. Others wondered how the students in their locality would be represented or what knowledge they would gain by learning about cultures with whom they had little personal contact. On the one hand, they realized the need to include Aboriginal and Francophone groups in curriculum discussions, but then they would question the privileging of one group over another. There seemed to be an understanding that the new curriculum should be multicultural and would have to move away from the knowledge of one predominant culture. However, much of the discussion reflected

moving to another perspective of the groups within the dominant culture. Participants talked about diversity and inclusion but wanted all cultural groups to be treated equally through a dominant multicultural perspective. The notion of difference was discussed, but it was observed that no group should be regarded differently and given preferential treatment. Teachers who thought history is an important part of the curriculum did not seem to reflect on their own understanding of history and a person's place in everyday life when discussing cultural difference, a multicultural curriculum, and dominant knowledge. The distinct outcomes related to this and were a topic that garnered attention and affected how people viewed a proposed curriculum that was trying to address and include cultural considerations. The distinct outcomes also related to two cultures, and most participants wanted to see a more inclusive view that recognized more than two cultures. However, there was a difficulty in understanding why or a reticence to understand why Aboriginal and Francophone groups should be recognized more than any other cultural group in Canada. An understanding of difference and an appreciation of the Other were expressed from each person's perspective and that perspective had been developed in their place in everyday life within their own locality.

CHAPTER 6

THE POSSIBILITIES AND DIFFICULTIES IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PLACES OF OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

Introduction

This chapter presents a narrative account of the early stages of the development of the WCP social studies *Foundation Document* and focus group sessions. The narrative is crafted from the interviews with participants in this study and scholarly information that was available to the researcher. In describing narrative analysis as a form of narrative inquiry, Polkinghorne (1995) has explained that narrative analysis produces stories as the outcome of research. In so doing it produces knowledge of particular situations in a way that maintains the complexity, and emotional and motivational meaning. The story that results from narrative analysis provides an explanatory answer to a question (e.g., What happened). The story fits the data while at the same time bringing an order and meaningfulness that is not readily apparent in the data themselves. The narrative resulting from a narrative analysis of data can be understood as an interpretive account of what transpired.

Tuan (1991, p. 686; as cited in Ellis, in press) has explained the value of a narrative-descriptive approach in contrast to efforts to more explicitly theorize events studied:

> All narratives and descriptions contain at least interpretive and explanatory strategems, for these are built into language itself. In a narrative-descriptive approach, however, the explicit formulation of a theory is not attempted, if only because such a theory, by its clarity and weight, tends to drive rival and complementary interpretations and explanatory sketches out of mind, with the result that the object of study, a human experience, which is almost always ambiguous and complex, turns into something schematic and etiolated. …In the

> narrative-descriptive approach, theories hover supportively in the background while the complex phenomena themselves occupy the front stage. (pp. 12-13)

In this chapter, I use a narrative approach to configure events and happenings into a temporal unity (Polkinghorne, 1995). A single theoretical explanation of events is not offered. Instead, as Tuan stated, theories hover supportively in the background while the story is at the forefront. In the next section I revisit theoretical work that may serve as a relevant backdrop for the story to be presented.

The narrative account I present in this chapter invites the reader to consider the significance of the places of the everyday lives of the interviewees who responded to the WCP *Foundation Document* and focus group process. Eyles (1989) explained the importance of everyday life in the formation of a person and in a person's formation of society:

> Everyday life is a taken-for-granted reality which provides the unquestioned background of meaning for the individual. It is a social construction which becomes a 'structure' itself. Thus through our actions in everyday life we build, maintain and reconstruct the very definitions, roles and motivations that shape our actions. We continuously maintain the culture and society which are the unquestioned background to our experience. But our actions do not occur within a vacuum. The patterns and meanings of, and reasons for, human actions are structured into and by the societies into which we are born. We both create and are created by society and these processes are played out within the context of everyday life. (p. 103)

Thus, the place of people's everyday lives provides a backdrop of meaning for their actions and motivations. We shape and are shaped by the culture and society in which we find ourselves. In working with the data in this study to produce a narrative account of participants' reflections on their experiences in the WCP *Foundation Document* and focus group process, I came to appreciate the meanings participants brought with them from the places of their everyday lives.

Through our actions in everyday life we build, maintain, and reconstruct the definitions, roles, and motivations that shape our actions (Eyles, 1989). The way we create meanings and values is influenced by our locality. In our lives, we derive meaning from our localities and this meaning is vital for the establishment of personal identity. "To be attached to a place is seen as a fundamental human need and, particularly as home, as the foundation of ourselves and our identities. Places are thus conceived as profound centres of human existence" (p. 109). Our histories and experiences are part of the multiplicity of time-space relations that create the conditions for our existence (Eyles, 1989). We construct individual social realities within the dominant system and continue to create and re-create ourselves through our everyday life experiences. The place of our everyday lives provides the backdrop of meaning to our actions.

The contributions of the people involved in the development of curriculum reflect the places of their everyday lives. Through interactions with family, neighbours, and workmates and the meanings derived from these regular interactions, people derive and reconstruct meaning that shapes their actions (Eyles, 1989). The social construction of behaviour, meaning, and context in everyday life is not static but a "dynamic process which is continually unfolding and emergent" (p. 102). Everyday life is socially and culturally different in different localities. Thus, the places of people's everyday lives are important and contribute to their ways of seeing and the meanings they ascribe to events and actions. Although the routines of everyday life may appear mundane, they actually have very complex consequences. The narrative account to be presented in this chapter reveals some of the consequences for a social studies curriculum development project which endeavored to include a culturally broad range of stakeholders.

Revisiting Background Theories

"Education provides the socializing processes and legitimating codes by which the grand narrative of progress and human development can be passed on to future generations" (Giroux, 1988, p. 5). Speaking from a critical theory perspective, Giroux argued that notions of the continuous growth and progress of western society drive the education system. We depend upon education to keep western society progressing. Teachers deliver a curriculum designed to maintain the dominant culture. Curriculum development is a technical-rational process that perpetuates modernist ideals. Apple (1995) has discussed the commodification of education. He theorized about knowledge as a form of capital and the role of schools in the distribution of knowledge to students. These ideas were refined from his earlier work wherein he critiqued schools as designed to maintain the unequal and stratified social order (Apple & King, 1977). Moving from Giroux and Apple in the late 20th century and into the new millennium, Smith (2000), in reviewing the processes of globalization, showed current influences on education to be driven by goals that are far removed from students and teachers. As society progresses through communication and technological advances, other agendas become involved in the purposes of education. The purpose of education is moving beyond the growth of western society to involving the forces of globalization. Globalization is not a "singular condition." It involves many different conditions that erode local influences by promoting the "aggressive subsumptive power of global market logic" (Smith, 2000, p. 14). Smith described these globalization conditions as a continuation of the virtues of self-interest and wealth accumulation, the building of Empire, the privileging of economic values over political, cultural, and social values, the de-localization of production, the

commercialization of human values, and the intertwining of the world's people to bring a universal cultural interfacing. Smith felt that there is a crisis in western academia and he challenges educators and researchers to question issues including "the meaning of Identity, the nature of 'Man,' the question of authority in knowledge, science as a cultural artifact, and racial and gender biases in curriculum" (p. 11).

Giroux (1988), for one, has challenged educators to question the hegemonic aspects of modern curriculum and its effects on children's education. He raised questions about the relationships of power in schools. Giroux envisioned that criticizing and challenging the curriculum allows teachers and curriculum developers to come to a new understanding of where schools and society can dwell. Apple and King (1977) asked the question, "What do schools teach?" They discussed schools as maintaining the existing social relations with knowledge as cultural capital. Thus schools are seen to provide knowledge that preserves the existing social structures. Apple (1993) continued to question the obstacles in transforming education. He suggests the need to ask many questions, "Whose knowledge is taught? Why is it taught in this particular way? How do we enable the histories and cultures of the majority of working people, of women, of people of colour to be taught in responsible and responsive ways in schools?" (p. 37). Theorists such as Giroux and Apple, using critique as a method of investigation, have observed that teachers have been relatively powerless in contemporary educational decision-making. Smith (2000) suggested that educators and researchers search for an "understanding of teachers' work that may provide an open space where pedagogically responsible work can both be considered and conducted" (p. 9).

Ellis (1999) argued for a need for a pedagogy that allows all students to belong and find genuine life chances. She described three areas to consider when examining the disadvantages some students face in the pedagogy of today's education. To construct coherent, positive, social identities that will allow minority students to function freely within society, "students need to have generous and positive access to their heritage culture while also acquiring knowledge and confidence with the content and codes of mainstream culture" (p. 172). She noted the mandate of teaching needs to change from a Eurocentric dominance to a consideration of curricula "that acknowledges and celebrates contributions and voices of all people in the world" (p. 176). Like others, she saw standardization of curriculum and assessment as a major impediment to accommodating cultural diversity in the classroom. The use of stories can transform students and schools. Ellis states students "can be transformed individually and collectively by hearing each other's stories" (p. 184). The sharing of stories can allow students and teachers to be transformed. This can create an environment in which a teacher feels comfortable and can come to an understanding about what students can do that will allow them to have success at school.

On Developing Curriculum

New curricula need to be developed to help us learn to live now (Smith, 2000). Smith argued that curricula have often frozen what will be and this results in a repeat of what was. Our understanding becomes a self-described 'neutral' narrative that actually perpetuates a globalized discourse of de-localization. A 'neutral' or 'homogenized' representation of culture discounts or caricaturizes cultural differences, minimizes the differences that exist between cultural groups, and becomes a representation of difference

(Richardson, 2000). Developing and teaching a curricula that recognizes where people are now can allow them to live and exist freely within their own culture.

Developing a pedagogy of compassion that recognizes all students can allow for the opportunity for students to draw freely from more than one culture and creatively construct "coherent and integrated social identities" (Ellis, 1999, p. 172). Western curricula generally advantages dominant White cultural groups. Minority groups, females, disabled and non-middle-class people are often marginalized by the curriculum. The instructional strategies, context, and methods used for assessing achievement in school tend to disadvantage minority students. Ellis wrote about including every child and giving all students the opportunity to belong. She supported the use of stories as a method to "show us the truth of things and teach us how to act and live" (p. 184). Bringing forth the stories of the people teaching and learning allows everyone to construct meaning from the stories. It moves curricula out of a cycle of perpetual Eurocentric dominance to a pedagogy that is open and considers the Other in a time that is open. Similarly, Carson and Johnson (2000) have suggested an open pedagogy can offer a "starting place for productive conversation with our students" (p. 82).

Curriculum development involves different forms of political action. Curriculum change is a political struggle dominated by the colonial perspective of "former immigrants who forget that white is a colour too" (Chambers, 1999, p. 143). Political struggles, which could be an endless or painful process, were often ignored or avoided. Chambers described Canadian curriculum writers as being preoccupied with being dominated by external forces. English writers feel marginalized through British colonization and American domination. French-Canadian writers feel internal

colonization from the English domination of Canada. It is only recently that marginalized groups are being represented in Canadian literature. Chambers (1999) continued to describe the Canadian sense of marginalization as opening possibilities "for sensitivity to otherness, difference, life, and seeing the world simultaneously from multiple intersecting latitudes and longitudes" (p. 144).

A New Narrative of Curriculum: The Western Canada Protocol for Social Studies Education

In developing a new social studies curriculum, Alberta Learning was seeking a new interpretation of what it means to be a learner in the 21st century (Alberta Learning, 1999). To develop a curriculum that would be desirable to a greater variety of people, groups were invited to help plan a new curriculum that would work on behalf of everyone.

As part of a broader initiative to design curriculum frameworks for the core academic subjects, Alberta Learning became involved with the Western Canada Protocol (WCP) to develop a new social studies curriculum near the end of the 1990's. The *Foundation Document* for the development of the Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12 was guided by a vision to "meet the needs and reflect the nature of the twenty-first century learner. . . . It will be reflective of Aboriginal, English language, Francophone and multicultural perspectives" (Alberta Learning, 1999, p. 4). Alberta Learning was looking to develop a curriculum that would provide opportunities for belonging for all students. The preliminary work involved inviting Aboriginal and Francophone representatives as full and equal partners in developing a framework for the new curriculum. Selected Aboriginal and Francophone researchers, along with selected

university social studies professors, were asked to submit literature reviews to highlight social studies trends and issues to guide and inform the development of the WCP social studies curriculum framework and the development of the April 1999 draft of the *Foundation Document.*

Alberta Learning (1999) was open to looking at expanding the existing curriculum development narrative. Aboriginal and Francophone minority groups were asked to be part of the development team and have representation on the provincial steering committee. There were province-wide focus groups to gather input into a review of the draft *Foundation Document.* Sixteen consultation forums were held including one Francophone forum. An Aboriginal forum was planned but did not materialize. The WCP and Alberta Learning took pride in a new and innovative process that they noted was a first for western and northern Canada (Alberta Learning, 1999). The WCP collaboration, the *Foundation Document* and the open consultation process that included focus groups and public submissions directly to Alberta Learning appeared to be an open process. It had the beginnings of a pedagogy designed with a difference. Minority and dominant cultural groups were sitting down at the same table to design a new curriculum that would meet the needs of all students. Francophone and Aboriginal representatives viewed the process with promise. There were high hopes that their cultures would finally be able to take their place alongside a culture that had repressed them socially and educationally. The WCP social studies curriculum development format did not discuss a modernist direction for curriculum development but started by using what appeared to be "new cognitive maps, different forms of representation that provide a systemic reading of the new age" (Giroux, 1988, p. 8).

With the promise of a new, innovative and leading edge curriculum, many people and groups got involved in the WCP social studies curriculum development process. Teachers, curriculum specialists, representatives of interest groups, and representatives of Aboriginal and Francophone cultural groups were among the people who came to the table to participate in a process of curriculum development. People came together to discuss a *Foundation Document* which would guide the framework for a new social studies curriculum. The participants wanted to give input into a curriculum that could change the way social studies would be provided. By reflecting on the world in which we live and through an understanding of the events that affect our actions, we can create the conditions for a meaningful existence (Eyles, 1989). By participating in this new curriculum development project, people saw the opportunity to contribute to the direction in which education would head at the start of the 21st century.

Curriculum developers from the western provinces and territories began the process and then, through focus groups, teachers from throughout Alberta had the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and ideas. The participants and contributors came from a variety of localities which can be understood as very different places. Participants included teachers, university professors (from the education faculty and other faculties such as economics), Aboriginal educators, Francophone educators, superintendents, school division curriculum coordinators, and people from private groups that wish to influence education. The difference in people's localities or places provided diverse sources of meaning. As Eyles (1989) has discussed, the places of people's everyday lives are reflected in the patterns and meanings of their actions. People as individuals "actively create and creatively transform themselves, and these constructions

and reconstructions are located firmly in an experience of everyday life which may result in different ways of seeing and acting in the world" (p. 108). Although it may appear that everyone seems to share the dominant meaning-system or hegemony, people are individuals with their own identities. The diverse social realities that are constructed and that were represented at the WCP social studies table were based on societal forces, socialization, and personal experiences in the places of participants' everyday lives (Eyles, 1989).

A Narrative Account of the WCP Social Studies Curriculum Development Process

The people participating in my interviews represented different places and different ways of seeing improvements to their everyday lives. Their experiences of everyday life informed their contributions to the curriculum development process of writing the document or giving feedback to the document. One person interviewed was involved with the WCP at beginning of the process that produced the initial version of the WCP social studies *Foundation Document*. Another group of participants included people from Aboriginal, Francophone, and dominant English speaking groups who responded to the original version that was released as the Alberta (April 1999) draft of the *Foundation Document* and was made publicly available. Other participants that were included in my interviews made contributions at the focus group forums or through an individually submitted response to the *Foundation Document*.

The Alberta group that read the original WCP version of the *Foundation Document* and revised it to become the April 1999 draft *Foundation Document* brought forth a document representing a compromise with which they wanted to begin the social

studies curriculum development process. Aboriginal and Francophone interests shared a place in the curriculum's foundation alongside English language and other multicultural groups. While the *Foundation Document* mentioned four groups—Aboriginal, Francophone, English language, and a multicultural perspective—most of the people interviewed referred to just three groups—Aboriginal, Francophone, and other cultural groups. The compromised and negotiated meanings in the *Foundation Document* were interpreted differently by the many people involved. Voice 13 commented on the different interpretations and the difficulty the different interpretations caused. "We ran into a very interesting problem of language in that the meaning of words change with culture." What began as a curriculum development process with hope and possibilities became a very difficult process with multiple interpretations and competing perspectives. The competing perspectives are apparent in the following comments from interviewees. Voice 12 was wholly supportive of the process. She supported the effort that Alberta Learning was making to involve people:

> I was aware of the process, . . . that it was nice. They [Alberta Learning] were trying not to make it top-down. They were trying to get input from a wide variety of stakeholders that I wouldn't have thought of as stakeholders. It added a lot of input into the document. I think it was a very good process.

Contrarily, Voice 4 had a different interpretation of the same process. "It was not a very politically astute way of going about curriculum development." Voice 4 was concerned that people would focus on the Aboriginal and Francophone components of the document, feel threatened, and then ignore the "true social studies nature of the document." He suggested that the conversations, discussions, debates and "in-fighting" would make for great difficulty in producing a unified curriculum.

Alberta Learning began a new process with the WCP social studies curriculum. People were challenged to question the modern curricula and develop a curriculum that would serve children and society in the 21st century. The curriculum had great possibility for being different by having Aboriginal and Francophone groups as equal partners. After the draft *Foundation Document* was prepared, it was opened to the largest feedback ever sought for a curriculum in Alberta or Canada (Joan Engel, personal communication, May, 1999). The document was vague in how it would achieve the lofty goals but appeared to be moving away from the Eurocentric dominant, technical-rational curriculum to which we are accustomed. There were many undefined areas and open ends within the *Foundation Document*. A curriculum document representing many voices was distributed and then publicly supported by Alberta Learning.

A compromise in curriculum development often results in a curriculum that is ineffective and meets no group's needs. The draft *Foundation Document* was presented with a unified front and a promise of hope. The initial steps ended with a cacophony of voices articulating a tension between philosophy, personal understanding and social agendas. Voice 10 explained why he felt the curriculum document needed to be more fully elaborated:

> Citizenship, diversity, globalization; education hasn't taken enough new ways to think about knowledge. The nature of knowledge, how we understand social studies and what that might be has not been addressed. The danger then is for it to become a curriculum in the traditional sense—outlines, knowledge, objectives but not that whole approach to learning social studies that we might want to involve people in such as narrative approaches, integration, using literature, social action, active learning, and Dewey's notion of learning. None of that is in here. So, that really worries me about this document.

Many people questioned the philosophy of including Aboriginal and Francophone perspectives as equal components of the curriculum. Aboriginal and Francophone groups

saw their well-deserved equal position in the curriculum attacked. Voice 2, an Aboriginal participant, said that the focus group participants were not pleased with the Aboriginal perspective in the document.

> My assumption is that the general public felt there was too much emphasis on the Aboriginal perspective and it should have been generally focused toward the majority culture, the majority people…The opportunities for change to better, to highlight, to bring forth the Aboriginal perspective is not welcomed.

Some of the people, many of whom could be classified as from the dominant Eurocentric group, questioned the inclusion of Aboriginal distinct outcomes. Voice 4 discussed his recollections of the concerns that other people expressed:

> The social studies teachers in the room couldn't really get away from talking about [the Aboriginal and Francophone components of the document]. And so, it usurped the conversation for an hour and a half or so. "Why do we have this?" "Why do we need to separate the Aboriginals and the Francophones out? We are all in this together." That surprised me a bit because I thought social studies teachers would take a more broad perspective. . . . We didn't talk about the outcomes. We didn't talk about the true nature of this document. We talked about the fact how come the Aboriginals are in there and how come the Francophones are in there.

Alberta Learning was questioned about how a regional curriculum or a common framework would benefit students when it did not draw upon local context. This caused difficulty for people in moving forward and discussing the social studies content of the *Foundation Document*. Voice 1 summarized his perspective of the difficulties he observed in the focus group proceedings.

> The attempt to design something that fit the characteristics of the four provinces and the two territories resulted in something that in certain areas, particularly this area of national identity formation and ethnic identity, most classroom teachers felt it wasn't going to apply to their situation. It certainly didn't describe some of the realities of the classrooms of social studies teachers in Alberta, nor did it in other jurisdictions. B.C. has chosen to downgrade its participation to observer status.

Voice 10 expressed similar concerns when he stated:

> One thing I wonder about is the value of having a common framework across the four western provinces and whether or not that is a good thing. There's that whole issue which I haven't really thought about at all, what would be good about having a common curriculum framework…That kind of tension being put forth or then you ask, why not a national curriculum? What does it say about Canadian identity…It was never explained why that was a good thing. I can certainly see some benefit for the children in Alberta knowing more in-depth [about Canadian identity]. But, even then it doesn't seem to be a benefit to have a common framework…I am torn because on the one hand there's the whole post-modern critique that says we pay attention to the local community as a way to understand ourselves. So, in a sense it goes against having a common curriculum."

Voice 1 offered the following observations about differences and difficulties during our interview. He stated "social studies reflects different historical conditions in each of the jurisdictions and different demographic realities and different cultural realities. . . . It is clear there is quite a range of cultural, demographic conditions across the land. We don't have the same experiences."

When people came together at focus group forums to discuss the *Foundation Document* their ways of seeing the document and the meanings taken from the document were different. There were diverse responses and readings of the content. The people came from different localities of everyday life and this resulted in different interpretations. Some individuals supported the philosophy of the document yet questioned how we could move forward with it. Some supported the document but questioned how it could work. Voice 11 was supportive of the philosophy of the document but questioned how it might work.

> I found it very confusing. I looked at it as a core document for all students in Alberta. . . . When I look at this I say, "Do all students see themselves?" You could see there were some objectives just for Aboriginal students; some were just for Francophone students. I said, "How are you going to do this? I found it confusing and so did the people out in the field.

Other individuals read the document, questioned where they were represented and became angry. Voice 5 observed the reactions of the others in the focus group and saw a change in demeanor when the discussion progressed.

> I was kind of watching other people's reactions and we went from a group of people that was quite happy, quite excited about being there…Here was a potentially very positive group of people that had become very angry and very defensive in a matter of minutes.

In questioning how the curriculum would work in the classroom Voice 7 noted some concerns.

> We didn't really understand what they meant by this…A lot of people looked at the curriculum and said, "No, you cannot have and run three different curricula. You're going to have an Aboriginal curriculum, a Francophone curriculum, and an English curriculum. . . . Get real guys, we have a hard enough time now in social studies at the high school." . . . It's just not possible, you just can't do it, you know the practicalities. I think that message came out loud and clear.

Some participants stated that they "sat back" and observed the proceedings at a focus group and questioned if the process could continue under such difficult conditions. Voice 4 expressed "I don't want to belabour the point but the difficulties with the whole process kind of frightens people." Voice 5 echoed these concerns saying, "I don't know how it is going to work. I really see it being problematic in many ways. I don't know how it is going to be done." During the focus group sessions, different understandings of the *Foundation Document* occurred. The conflicting interpretations of the document as presented in the focus groups made it difficult to proceed from the *Foundation Document* to the next stage in the curriculum development process. It became apparent that a curriculum that "transforms individuals and communities" (Ellis, 1999, p. 13) would not be easily achieved. People responded from the places of their everyday lives and did not want to compromise or negotiate their personal interpretation.

The curriculum development process became fraught with difficulties. The people attending focus group sessions and the people who submitted critiques of the *Foundation Document* talked about the difficulties from their personal perspectives. The process was supposed to be open and accepting of a wide range of criticisms. The process became bogged down as people focused on wondering how their questions would be addressed. Alberta Learning attempted to be open and held focus group forums to collect feedback. How people anticipated that their feedback would be used was different. Voice 13 talked about the difficulty in trying to address everyone's concerns.

> From every experience I've had with the [Alberta steering] committee, people were listened to and a number of changes were made. Perhaps not as many changes as the focus groups would have wanted but as I explained, it's the nature of the thing that not everyone is going to be satisfied.

Cultural Plurality and Multicultural Places

Questions of culture have become important to the social studies curriculum (Carson, 1998). This was view was expressed by many people involved in the focus groups and was discussed in my interviews. Identity, culture, multiculturalism, and citizenship are terms that have been used but not totally understood in the context of a social studies curriculum. Carson (1998), in attempting to excavate his cultural identity, discussed the difficulty of becoming aware of culture "not as an object but as a location" (p. 6). Bhabha's (1995) concept of cultural difference acknowledges a person's location within their culture and in relation to others. With a relatively new perspective, undefined terms, and having to share a privileged position, many teachers do not know how to address the culturally diverse needs of the children in their classes or how to frame the questions to ask.

Carson (1998) voiced a common concern when he stated, "As educators wishing to make culture present in curriculum and teaching, we seem to be caught in a dilemma of being aware of culture and yet unable to move beyond essentialisms and stereotypes" (p. 5). The WCP Social Studies *Foundation Document* attempted to address the unique needs of cultural groups in Alberta classrooms. Many people had read and critiqued the *Foundation Document* and then made revisions before it was presented to the public but there turned out to be considerable controversy over the way the document was laid out. While the document attempted to address all cultural groups, Aboriginal and Francophone groups garnered the most attention due to the distinct outcomes that supported their position in the curriculum. Voice 3 expressed concerns about the distinct outcomes.

> There seemed to be a line drawn where people would say we can't have distinct outcomes because it goes against trying to communicate a more inclusive view. And, other people would say, yes, we need to address the unique needs of the groups such as the Aboriginal and Francophone groups.

The philosophy of a curriculum that addresses the needs of the marginalized is to "recognize the importance of distinct groups within society and to right the imbalance between the individual and the collective" (Hebert, 1997, p. 85). The difficulty in discussing the complete *Foundation Document* stemmed from the inclusion of two identified minority cultures in the development and presentation of the curriculum. As individuals read, interpreted, contributed to the *Foundation Document* or discussed the document at a focus group session, they voiced their concerns. The concerns reflected the places of their everyday lives and illuminated perceived obstacles to developing the curriculum. The obstacles are part of what DePass and Hebert (1992) referred to as new conservatism which "excludes those different from the dominant cultural and economic

group" (p. 2). There developed a "tension between a specific but somewhat superficial attention to multiculturalism against a background of political and social concerns" (p. 2). While having difficulty with the distinct outcomes, many of the people interviewed were in agreement that the curriculum had to be changed to meet the needs of Alberta students. Voice 7 summed up the thinking of many social studies teachers when saying, "We still have to deal with the curriculum. We have a curriculum that has huge errors that doesn't recognize Natives. They have to make some changes. This (new curriculum) addresses that." He concluded with a concern that many focus group participants agreed with, "How much diversity do we allow without the entire curriculum becoming a total mess?"

Griffith, Labercane, and Paul (1995) argued that the object of multicultural education is not confirmation of sameness or discussions of difference, but rather "encounters which require an awareness of the deeply negotiated question of recognition" (p. 153). Multicultural education entails a responsible discussion of identity, recognition and Otherness. Teachers recognize the need for addressing social studies from different perspectives even though it can be difficult to grow beyond our conditioned convictions and create new possibilities for students to find belongingness. It seemed that some the people interviewed had difficulty envisioning a new place of authentic meaning. This is exemplified in some of the comments I received in my conversations. Voice 8 stated, "I didn't see anywhere where it talked about me celebrating and being part of a dynamic community." Voice 11 used the example of, "Why are there only two interest groups? A woman I know said, 'Where are the Scottish people?' So, its exciting but also different, different for many people." Voice 12 , in trying to be more politically correct said, "I remember, I think it was the back [of the *Foundation Document*] where they talked about

the different communities. The Francophone student needs to . . . and Aboriginal students need to . . . . And, my response was, don't all students need to . . . ?" Voices 5 and 10 found difficulty in giving Aboriginal and Francophone groups separate billing while all the other White cultures were grouped together. Voice 5 expressed, "I taught in N.E. Calgary. There were hardly any Anglophones and there were no Aboriginals and no Francophones. The students would have taken exception to the fact that they were all just being piled into this group called Anglophone." Voice 10 expressed the same sentiments when talking about big cities in Western Canada. "Big cities in Western Canada are extremely culturally diverse. The document has nothing to say about that so it's highly problematic to have Francophone, Aboriginal, and English and then lump everything else into an English category." The voices speaking in this paragraph concur with what Griffith *et al* (1995) said when they wrote about the difficulty in accepting or acknowledging difference in a multicultural society.

Alberta Learning and many of the people I interviewed recognized the importance of including Aboriginal and Francophone cultures in the curriculum. However, the way the *Foundation Document* was presented was the root much discussion. Many of the concerns and comments have been previously presented in this chapter. The following are more comments from interviewees who expressed more concerns. Voice 2 articulated:

> I had read an article coming out of Calgary specifically that they were not pleased with the Aboriginal perspective to this document. My assumption is the general public felt there was too much emphasis on that. It should have been generally focused toward the majority culture, the majority people.

Voice 11 stated that "teachers were ignorant about First Nations cultures and history." Voice 2 concluded our conversation with, "I know Alberta Learning has a lot of

learning to do, especially when their focus is so narrow minded in terms of Aboriginal people".

A common concern among teachers is changing the curriculum to address cultural identity. Edwards (1993) supported cultural and linguistic provisions being included in the curriculum. He states, "There is no theoretical reason why school curricula cannot attend to both multicultural awareness and provision of accepted "core" skills" (p. 134). Voice 6 reflected similar concerns in our discussion. She stated:

> I've only been taught a certain history or a certain social studies from a certain perspective. And, I think there's more perspectives… What about the Other? …I think kids across the country should be having the same opportunities. And, within that, we can make changes at a school site for our local target."

Voice 3, along the same lines, thought that the curriculum has to "encourage students from all across Canada to explore different facets of the Canadian identity, Canadian history, and different perspectives. You have to build those things in for all students."

For children to have positive attitudes towards school and learning they need to have a sense of relatedness (Osterman, 2000). Voice 9 opined, "Perhaps we ought to do a little bit more than what we presently do." To do more could provide a place that would enable children to experience a sense of relatedness. To start in this direction the current curriculum needs to change. Voice 2 was alluding to this when she said the current curriculum "does not allow students to expand their knowledge and wisdom to learn who they are as a person, as a people. . . . We need to know who we are first and foremost—being able to feel comfortable and proud about who we are." Voice 8 reiterated the need for children to experience belongingness but did not know how to accomplish that goal, "I think my role as a social studies teacher is to help all children to

feel they are part of the community. . . . I don't know how I would teach that." Most of the people I interviewed agreed that the "experience of belongingness is important at all ages and at all levels from preschool through high school" (Osterman, 2000, p. 343), but they could not define how to accomplish that goal through a new social studies curriculum.

In discussing the *Foundation Document* at focus group sessions, participants raised questions about how to meet individual student's or communities' cultural needs through the curriculum. Voice 1 expressed a common sentiment when he said, "The fact that it [*Foundation Document*] didn't work that well shows how problematic it is, how difficult it is, to design something that captures regional identity." The difficulty was evident in comments teachers made relating to the *Foundation Document* and the focus group sessions. Voice 5 asked the pointed question, "How might we address the curriculum in such a way that we learn about all sorts of different groups?" The multicultural and differentiating nature of classrooms across the major cities (and the province) makes it difficult to have one specific curriculum if we are to meet the needs of all students so she felt the curriculum "can't be too prescriptive." Voice 5 also saw a problem in defining and using terms related to culture. She recollected from her focus group session, "What began to bother most people was the number of times we weren't just talking about difference and how we might accommodate difference but we were actively identifying different groups and treating them differently." Voice 10 illustrated the inherent difficulty of a curriculum development process that attempts to address the needs of specific cultural groups.

> The main concern I had was the way it took up difference—cultural difference. . . . I've thought about this before and it's kind of a complex thing. On the one hand I'm sympathetic to the need to take up Aboriginal education. Its often been neglected in social studies and education in general. I'm particularly sympathetic to First Nation communities who say they want education . . . as a way to build, not just to build culture but also to cover culture. We were hearing Ovid Mercredi speak at a social studies conference a couple of years ago where he talked about how education should serve to recover, to help them in the recovery of their culture and to help them build identity. So, I am very sympathetic to that. But, the problem is the way the notion of difference gets conceptualized in terms of all learners in western Canada. . . . Big cities in western Canada are extremely culturally diverse and the document has nothing to say about that. It's highly problematic to have Francophone, Aboriginal, and English and then to lump everything into that category, . . . so my concerns are on two levels. One level would be ignoring the nature of cultural diversity in modern society by lumping everything into an English category. But also to even talk about Aboriginal culture is problematic, I think.

Citizenship Education as Multicultural Education

Many of the interviewees discussed citizenship education as important to address to make the curriculum better for children and communities. The reference to citizenship education could be a cause for concern for some people. Earlier views of citizenship did not include multiculturalism or cultural acceptance. Osborne (1997) explained, "Historically, citizenship has been used to justify attempts to eradicate minority cultural traditions that were seen by dominant groups as inconsistent with their vision of citizenship" (p. 4). Hebert (1997) reconsidered the concept of citizenship and expands the definition to "include many citizens of both genders, of many races, nations, ethnicities, cultures, languages, and religions" (p. 93). Hebert suggested defining citizenship to reflect a new conception that balances the understanding of ourselves and others. This definition seems to be compatible with many of the comments made during my interviews. Voice 4 said, "Citizenship education is important and should be important within the document. It should be a much more wide ranging viewpoint of citizenship

that would include women's rights, human rights, Aboriginal rights, Francophone rights, etc., and responsibility for kids." Voice 7 had similar thoughts when he said he agreed with "the idea of citizenship as government, gender, and culture. You still have to keep social justice throughout. You still have to do something that's workable." Voice 10 expanded upon the citizenship concept and expressed strong convictions about how it was represented in the *Foundation Document.*

> I like the fact it [*Foundation Document*] addresses, talks about the purposes, in terms of citizenship as being the central purpose of social studies. In terms of the citizenship goal, I thought that they didn't define it very well. They left it very abstract. That's something I've been concerned about in my own work., trying to look at citizenship in a more practical or practice-oriented way.

The differing voices are what Sears (1997) was referring to when talking about social studies. "Citizenship education is a contested concept, meaning very different things to different people. At one end of the continuum citizenship is seen in passive terms. . . . At the other end of the continuum are those who envision active, participatory citizenship" (pp. 20-21). The differing views were obstacles in addressing multicultural education and citizenship education. Political and social concerns were making it difficult for many to accept the WCP social studies curriculum as it was presented. Teachers and curriculum developers needed to reconcile their differing views before they could assist students to also come to an understanding of the differing views. DePass and Hebert (1992) summarized: "The reconciliation of conflicting views pertaining to the development of a social justice infrastructure and the <<new>> conservatism would allow individuals and groups with radically different views of society and their place therein to co-exist peacefully and productively" (p. 6).

Citizenship education becomes a matter of belief (Osborne, 1997). Developing a sense of identity is part of citizenship education. In an attempt to move away from an assimilationist Canadian identity, citizenship education becomes an avenue for social studies to celebrate a "multicultural, hyphenated Canadian" (p. 47). In our conversations, the interviewees were more like to refer to citizenship education as all encompassing and rarely referred to multiculturalism or culture. Aboriginal and Francophone cultures were the topic of much discussion because the distinct outcomes were organized to include Aboriginal and Francophone groups as equal partners with the White Anglophone group and the fourth group of other cultures. Voice 1 summed up the difficulty by saying, "[The *Foundation Document*] had no language to describe multiculturalism in the same set of terms that they had a language to describe Francophone or Aboriginal groups." Multicultural issues only arose when people questioned where their perceived cultural groups were represented in the curriculum. As Razack (1998) articulated, "Emphasis on cultural diversity too often descends, in a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place" (p. 9).

Through reading the *Foundation Document*, participating in a focus group session and then recollecting the experience, the people I interviewed had the opportunity to reflect upon their philosophy of education relating to culture and multicultural curricula. Bowers (1995) argued "Teachers need to address the deepest cultural assumptions reproduced through both the implicit and explicit curriculum. But, the biggest challenge is recognizing the false consciousness that now exists" (p. 40). Some of the conversations I had did go deeper in examining culture and how it was to be represented, Voice 3

reflected, "the Aboriginal and Francophone perspective seemed to be described in terms of language and culture and I thought that was a fairly limiting description. . . . There are other aspects of identity that contribute other than just language and culture." Voice 10 commented about the danger of freezing culture in time, and thus, "treating culture as just another thing that we teach kids without looking at it in terms of relationships. . . . I think it is tentative to freeze cultures as if there was a Francophone culture, as if there was an Aboriginal culture." Voice 13 added, "Students [need to] understand there are different cultures with different points of view and these points of view, although defeated as in the Riel Rebellion, may not be without legitimacy." Later in our conversation, he continued:

> I thought this idea [of addressing the Aboriginal and Francophone cultures] fit in. In terms of cultural conflict it would help give a wider, broader understanding of different cultures, different points of view and perhaps serve to alleviate some of the misunderstandings of the different cultures in Canada."

This narrative has been developed to offer an interpretive account of a component of a curriculum development process. The writing of the WCP social studies *Foundation Document* and the facilitation of focus group sessions to respond to this document were key events in the development process of a new curriculum. The WCP curriculum development process asked people to critically reflect on the proposed WCP curriculum and have a voice in transforming education. The *Foundation Document* turned out to be controversial and evoked much discussion. By inviting people to tell their stories of participation in the WCP social studies curriculum development process, I was able to acquire insight into their experiences with the curriculum development process as well as the nature of the places of their everyday lives.

Giroux (1988) challenged educators to question modernist curricula and the processes of curriculum development. As Smith (2000) stated, we need curricula to help students learn to live now. The voices presented in this thesis discussed the WCP social studies curriculum as presented in the *Foundation Document*. Alberta Learning asked for feedback on the *Foundation Document* and the replies came as a resounding chorus. The responses of the interviewees were a polyphony of voices regarding the possibilities for a more adequate social studies curriculum. Many people began by reflecting on the existing curriculum as they questioned the viability or adequacy of social studies as proposed in the *Foundation Document*. The people I interviewed expressed diverse beliefs about how the curriculum could or could not address culture and the meaning of identity.

Hearing people's reactions to the document, the curriculum development process, and their personal perceptions of the role of social studies heightened my appreciation of the importance and difficulties of developing curricula that positively support cultural pluralism in multiple localities. All the participants in my research came from different localities and this was reflected in their diverse perceptions of the *Foundation Document.* Many of the people I interviewed became quite animated as they expressed their views and related their experiences. I was a participant in the reliving of their experiences. Emotional meaning, in all its complexity, was present in the stories that were shared (Polkinghorne, 1995). I was able to come to an understanding of the significance of the places of people's everyday lives in providing a backdrop of meaning for actions and events (Eyles, 1989). The structure of the WCP *Foundation Document* can be read in several ways and at several levels. By not defining the structure of the document as I

presented the narrative, I have tried to avoid the modernist impulse and have endeavoured to keep it open to rereading.

CHAPTER 7

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

My life and my research began with a naivety about the influence and control that White Eurocentric traditions hold on everyday activities. I grew up in a western Canadian community where visible minorities and different knowledge were something from American television and movies. Throughout my life journey, events occurred or opportunities presented themselves that supported slight changes to my cultural and political awareness. This thesis work has contributed enormously to the growth of my awareness and understanding with regards to cultural pluralism and the role of curriculum in education.

I experienced similar growth in insight in my spiritual life a few years ago at a conference for Catholic school administrators. Throughout the conference we talked about spiritual guidance, with the culminating activity being the development of our own personal spiritual autobiography. In reflecting on my life's events and the places of my everyday life, I was able to see differently opportunities that had been available as well as the effects of decisions I had made. As a person of faith, in hindsight, I was able to see where Christ had been present in my life. I saw these places only upon reflection, looking back over the path I had chosen. Some of my new understandings were different from my previous understandings and these came from reflecting on the experiences of my whole life in the light of more recently acquired ideas and insights.

My research and thesis has been a journey with similar opportunities for reflection and hindsight. This research does not correspond with the initial ideas I had for topics when I began my graduate program. Much like my life, as I progressed through my

graduate course work, the research proposal, my research, and the writing of this thesis, events happened, people entered my life, and slight changes occurred in my direction. It seemed that as I developed new knowledge and became more open to different learning, I came to new understandings. As in my spiritual journey, through my research I was transformed. There was no pronounced 'aha,' but through the course of my work I began to see the "connections." While writing this final chapter I took a step back from my work. I saw where I came from and the different paths that appeared on my journey. Most deeply, I came to understand that we need to honour and be cognizant of the places of people's everyday lives.

My research is an examination of part of a curriculum development process. Curriculum development can be a difficult task involving decisions about what students need to learn. It is a large responsibility to make students' lives better. There can be considerable complexity in moving a curriculum development project along to a finished product that is ready for classroom use. Alberta Learning chose a path that involved the participation of several different groups (Aboriginal, Francophone, and other cultural groups) in the development of The WCP *Foundation Document* for social studies (April 1999 draft). The number of people involved became considerably larger when the process was opened up to invite all interested parties to provide input through focus group sessions or through an Internet reply format. The process of this curriculum development project seemed to be a cumbersome undertaking.

This thesis reflects my new understanding that curriculum is a verb and not a noun. My excitement in the work evolved from my interest in the process of curriculum development. I wanted to know how the curriculum documents delivered to schools came

to be. I have come to appreciate that the curriculum can be seen as more than just an official government document. The curriculum can become or be understood as a living and evolving entity. The process of the focus group sessions and even my interviews with the participants are in fact curriculum when curriculum is understood as a verb. The challenge is to enhance the opportunity for teachers and students to understand and contribute to curriculum as a verb.

I began my graduate work with an understanding of curriculum as a way to provide students with the knowledge they need to know to live productive lives in today's society. In my research I initially intended to undertake a discourse analysis of the *Foundation Document*. I conducted interviews only to broaden my interpretive frameworks for the planned discourse analysis. Once I was conducting the interviews and learning how others made sense of their WCP social studies experiences, however, I discovered that my interest was not in the interpretation of the text of the *Foundation Document* but in how others reacted to this text—how people read the text, the understanding taken from the words, how people expected others to react to what they read, and how people saw themselves affected by what they interpreted the text to represent. Using an interpretive inquiry method, I started to look at curriculum development differently. I learned that curriculum and the key concepts in my research were not static or predetermined by a higher authority such as Alberta Learning. I came to understand that curriculum can be open to meeting the culturally diverse needs of children in classrooms. As I began my research it became apparent to me that curriculum—a verb—is a process and the dynamics of this process fascinated me.

A challenge in education is to reflect upon representational practices in curriculum such as knowledge, culture, identity, and power. A critical look at representation in the curriculum ought to include examining the curriculum development process itself. To avoid falling back into a modernist perspective and to be open to a different curriculum, I used critical theory and also included other perspectives such as feminist-postmodern theory. There are many influences on lived curriculum such as others' histories, memories, languages, and futures. There needs to be recognition that there are different teachers and different students with different histories. A different curriculum is needed to critique knowledge and allow students to share and accept others' knowledge and culture. Critical theory and feminist-postmodern theory allowed me to look at the *Foundation Document* and not have to suggest one truth or knowledge about the process I studied. I provide my findings and analysis and invite the reader to come to his or her own understanding about how knowledge, culture, identity, and power are addressed through the curriculum.

In raising the issue of representation in the curriculum, I am not suggesting that a core or common curriculum can successfully include representation of every ethnic or interest group in Alberta. Instead, I have come to appreciate the need for space for teachers and students to meaningfully engage the topics and realities (including absent ones) of difference within their own localities. My views of this are congruent with feminist-postmodern ideas about the importance of social justice and the significance of local subjectivities (Giroux, 1992), Eyles' (1989) examination of the importance of place in everyday life, and McCarthy's (1993) definition of emancipatory multiculturalism. If such spaces were provided, my hope would be that all students could experience the

social acceptance and "belongingness" (Osterman, 2000) needed for full participation in classroom learning. I see the vision of curriculum as a postmodern one that can be difficult to articulate within the typically modernist construction of curriculum documents and plans.

The *Foundation Document* was a change from the existing curriculum and the way the social studies curriculum was to be constructed and taught. The *Foundation Document* attempted to acknowledge the cultural plurality of Alberta. It was addressing multiculturalism, knowledge, and the importance of identity. These concepts were open to feedback, and the proposed direction of the curriculum evoked much discussion. As people responded to the *Foundation Document*, there was polyphony of voices speaking out. As a result of the inclusion of the many people and two defined cultural groups, it was difficult to hear any agreement on the curriculum. What began as a project that had promise to be new and different and to include Aboriginal and Francophone groups with distinct outcomes became bogged down. A positive outcome of the *Foundation Document* and the response process was the large involvement of people and the realization that curriculum does not come from the document but from the people.

The WCP social studies *Foundation Document* (April 1999 draft) and response process provide rich ideas for future research. Researchers could explore curriculum from the beginning stages of the development process such as the WCP *Foundation Document* through to addressing distinct cultural needs in the implemented program of studies. The process that Alberta Learning used in this research provides many different opportunities for continued or related research. Some questions that could be explored include:

- Who are the voices in education? How can Alberta Learning enlist the many voices in education to develop a curriculum that meets the different needs of the students in the province?
- Are distinct outcomes as defined in the WCP *Foundation Document* (April 1999 draft) a realistic part of a curriculum? How can the curriculum be meaningful to people in the places of their everyday lives?
- How can a pluralistic province/country be served by the curriculum and how should that curriculum be pursued? Can a subject that has provincial achievement exams allow the addressing of local concerns?

Curriculum development is an exciting process. A difficulty lies in coming to an agreement about what students need to know and whose knowledge defines what is important to learn. Curriculum development can allow the inclusion of all students by realizing that there is no one truth. By looking at curriculum differently we can begin to understand what opportunities are open to others. A rereading of the curriculum can invite all students to be represented. Allowing students to participate in the places of their everyday lives can allow for a more meaningful curriculum. I hope that this thesis is presented in such a way to allow the readers to appreciate my perspective while coming to their own understandings of the curriculum development process. What I have learned during my research journey is to always reflect upon my understanding and my actions in education. I hope to learn and continue to grow so that my students have the opportunity to participate in meaningful educational activities.

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APPENDIX A

FOUNDATION DOCUMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMON CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 12

FOUNDATION DOCUMENT
for the Development of The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies Kindergarten–Grade 12

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INTRODUCTION

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (1993) states that the Ministers of Education in the four western provinces and two territories agree to collaborate in basic education because of the importance they place on four major goals:

1. high standards of education
2. common educational goals
3. removing obstacles to the access of educational opportunities for students, including improving the ease of transfer from jurisdiction to jurisdiction
4. optimum use of educational resources

The process for the creation of the Western Canadian Protocol Foundation Document and The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12 (hereafter referred to as the Framework) is unprecedented in Canadian curriculum development. For the first time in western and northern Canadian history, Aboriginal and Francophone representatives have been included as full and equal partners in the development of a common curriculum framework for social studies. This collaboration is a unique opportunity for the Framework to reflect the complex and diverse nature of Canada and to contribute to a balanced and inclusive vision of our country.

The purpose of this Foundation Document is to provide direction to the developers of the Framework. This Framework will be composed of a common core of learning outcomes for all students and will allow for distinctive outcomes for Aboriginal and Francophone students. There will be a single Framework, available in both English and French. An adaptation of the Framework will be prepared for French Immersion. [1]

VISION

The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12 will meet the needs and reflect the nature of the twenty-first-century learner and will have the concept of Canadian citizenship and identity at its heart. It will be reflective of Aboriginal, English language, Francophone, and multiple cultural perspectives. The Framework will ultimately contribute to a Canadian spirit - a spirit that will be fundamental in creating a sense of belonging for each one of our students as he or she engages in active and responsible citizenship locally, nationally, and globally.

The Framework will provide guidance to develop curriculum that will express the Aboriginal perspective. It will acknowledge the Aboriginal homeland and people as foundational to Canada and the Canadian spirit. It will help Aboriginal students claim their culture and affirm their identity. It will also engender understanding for all students with respect to Aboriginal culture.

The Framework will help attain the goals of Francophone Education in developing and strengthening language, identity, culture, and community.

Definition of Social Studies

For the purpose of developing the Foundation Document and the Framework, the following definition of social studies has been adopted:

Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. It is an interdisciplinary subject that draws upon many disciplines, including history, geography, economics, law, and political science. Social studies focuses on people's relationships with their social, physical, spiritual, cultural, economic, political, and technological environments. Social studies helps students become active and responsible citizens within their communities, locally, nationally, and globally, in a complex and changing world.

Role of Social Studies

The role of social studies is to enable students to

1. develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the practice of democratic ideals, and aware of their capacity to effect change

2. understand their rights and responsibilities in order to fully participate in society

   Social studies will enable Francophone students to assert their rights and responsibilities as fully participating French-speaking citizens of Canada.

   Social studies will enable Aboriginal students to understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens of Aboriginal Nations and of Canada

3. demonstrate a critical understanding of the role of social, political, and legal institutions in promoting individual and collective well-being

4. understand and appreciate the unique nature of Canada, its land, history, complexities, and current issues

5. celebrate and strengthen the Canadian identity, and understand and honour the traditions, concepts, and symbols that are its expression

6. thrive in their cultural and Canadian identity with a legitimate sense of belonging to their communities and to Canada

   Social studies will enable Francophone students to develop a sense of legitimacy and pride in their *francité* (language, identity, and culture), and to participate in building a dynamic community.

   Social studies will enable Aboriginal students to become grounded in, and proud of their Aboriginal identity, and to participate in living and renewing their culture.

7. appreciate and respect Aboriginal, Francophone, English language, and multiple cultural perspectives, and understand how these perspectives have shaped Canada's political and cultural reality

8. value diversity

9. respect the dignity and support the equality of all human beings

10. develop a sense of social compassion, fairness, and justice

11. recognize, speak out and take action against injustice as it occurs in their schools, communities, Canada, and the world

12. understand Canadian and world history, so as to better comprehend the present and to influence the future wisely for the well-being of all

13. critically consider and understand historic and contemporary issues, including controversial issues and values, from diverse perspectives

14. understand geographic concepts

15. develop a global consciousness with respect to the human condition and world issues

16. understand political and economic concepts

17. understand how political and economic distributions of power affect individuals, communities, and nations

18. understand the contemporary and historical effects of media and technology on society

19. understand human interdependence in society and with the natural environment

20. develop a consciousness for the limits of nature and a sense of stewardship for the land, as well as a commitment to the practice of sustainable development

21. engage in problem-solving and conflict resolution with an awareness of the ethical consequences of decision-making

22. engage in active inquiry, critical and creative thinking, and the construction of meaning

23. conduct research using diverse methods and sources, and be able to organize, interpret, and present that research

24. develop effective communication skills

    Social studies will enable Francophone students to listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent in French in order to think, conceptualize, access information, and communicate effectively.

25. understand and critically use information technologies

26. develop collaborative and cooperative skills

27. enhance their cultural literacy by exploring connections with language arts, dramatic arts, visual arts, movement, and music

Guiding Principles for Writing The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12

The following guiding principles are based on current research and observation of successful social studies programs. They will provide direction for the development of the Framework.

1. In order to become active and responsible citizens, students need to understand, develop, practice, and value citizenship skills. When they are provided with authentic opportunities to participate as citizens within the classroom, the school, and the community, they will develop life-long citizenship skills and attitudes.

2. Students need to be provided with opportunities to explore their personal and Canadian heritage in order to develop a positive self-concept and to construct and affirm their identity and sense of citizenship.

3. In order to reflect Canadian diversity, social studies should focus on the roles, perspectives, and contributions of Aboriginal, English language, Francophone, and the many other cultural groups of Canada.

4. Social studies learning should include an understanding that
    - socio-cultural variables (e.g., gender, age, language, religion, and spirituality) affect people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours
    - there is as much variation between the members of a cultural group as there is between different cultural groups
5. Each student is a unique individual who brings to the classroom a particular set of cultural and linguistic characteristics, and learns best when his or her language and culture are valued.

6. Social studies provides opportunities for Aboriginal students to understand and be connected to their spiritual environment and for all students to learn about the spiritual dimension of Aboriginal culture.

7. Students learn to understand and value the views of others when they are given opportunities to become aware of diverse perspectives, to interact with people who hold diverse views, and to reflect critically on a variety of world views and perspectives. These opportunities help raise cultural consciousness and combat stereotyping and discrimination.

8. Construction of historical knowledge and understanding is fundamental to social studies learning; students need to be engaged in the investigation and interpretation of the chronological, socio-cultural, economic, environmental, and political dimensions of history.

9. Aboriginal students need to be provided with opportunities to preserve and regenerate the teachings and oral traditions of their elders, and to understand the history of their local Aboriginal communities.

10. Social studies needs to provide opportunities for students to understand the geographic concepts of location, place, human/environment interaction, movement, and region.

11. Social studies needs to provide opportunities for students to understand important concepts related to the various social studies disciplines such as economics, law, and political science.

12. Students need to be provided with a balance between breadth and depth of knowledge in social studies, as well as a balance between local, Canadian, and global issues.

13. Students need to be provided with opportunities to develop a consciousness for the limits of nature, a sense of stewardship, and a commitment to the concept of sustainable development.

14. Students become ethical, creative and critical decision-makers through active inquiry into social issues. This includes a consideration of their own and others' values and an examination of controversial issues.

15. Students need to be provided with opportunities to use and manage information and communication technologies critically, and to understand the historical and ongoing impact of media and technology on society.

16. The integration of language arts, dramatic arts, visual arts, movement, and music within social studies adds meaning and relevance for students.

17. Social studies involves the study of individuals and groups, values and intentions, events, places, and time. By providing personal and cultural perspectives through the integration of oral and written stories, legends, and narratives, teachers will enhance social studies concepts and inspire an aesthetic response from students.

18. Social studies learning is facilitated by social interactions and communication with others in a variety of flexible, adaptive, and diverse instructional settings, including
    - on-the-land and fieldwork experiences
    - technology-assisted experiences
    - home and community involvement
    - experiential learning

19. Students learn best when their learning is supported by their school, family, and community.

The following principles reflect the particular needs of Francophone students and should be supported by the Framework.

20. The promotion of additive bilingualism and French language development are an integral part of learning in social studies for Francophone students.

21. Historical understanding, including awareness of the heritage and contributions of Francophones to society, is essential for the construction of identity and citizenship for Francophone students.

22. Construction of cultural identity and integration into the Francophone community are achieved through an interdependent school-home-community partnership and meaningful cultural experiences related to the student's life.

A Model for The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12

VISION STATEMENT

Social Studies Organizers

- Citizenship and Governance
- Global Connections
- Identity, Culture, and Community
- The Land: People and Places
- Time, Continuity, and Change

General Outcomes*

Specific Outcomes*

- Attitudes and Behaviours
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Skills and Processes

* Including distinctive General and Specific Outcomes for Aboriginal and Francophone students

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Vision

The vision for the Framework provides the basis for the Social Studies Organizers and the development of General Outcomes and Specific Outcomes.

Social Studies Organizers

The Social Studies Organizers are intended to provide a broad basis for the development of General and Specific Outcomes, and do not represent themes or discrete units of study.

1. Citizenship and Governance
Fundamental to social studies is the concept of active and responsible citizenship within local communities, Canada, and the world. This includes ideas such as informed participation in the political process, contributing to the common good, the balance between rights and responsibilities, ethical decision-making, critical and creative thinking, respect for the dignity and value of all human beings, conflict resolution, cooperation, and an understanding of governance. Commitment to democratic ideals such as equality, freedom, rights, and responsibilities is also critical to citizenship. Important concepts related to governance include power, authority, justice, and institutions, as well as people and their political, legal, technological, economic, and physical environments.

2. Global Connections
Global connections are becoming increasingly important among world societies. Important ideas include globalization, environmental issues, international aid, emerging technologies and world economic systems, interdependence, politics, human rights, and the dynamic relationship between domestic and global concerns.

3. Identity, Culture, and Community
Identity stems in part from language, culture, and community. Integral to identity is the feeling of acceptance and belonging. This includes an understanding of concepts such as personal identity and cultural heritage, belief systems, multiple cultural perspectives, regionalism, pluralism, Canadian identity, world views, and world cultures. Humans exist in the context of communities; this relationship requires an understanding of how to live together with respect to similarities and differences, perspectives, equality and diversity, interaction and cooperation, and appreciation of others.

4. The Land: People and Places
Humans exist in a dynamic relationship with the land. Related geographic concepts include location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region. Skills include organizing information into a spatial context, and making informed and critical decisions about the relationship between human beings and their environment, within the contexts of stewardship and sustainable development.

5. Time, Continuity, and Change
History provides an understanding of the present and helps shape and influence the future. Related skills and attitudes include inquiry, the construction of historical knowledge and understanding, informed decision-making, interpretation, research, and acceptance of the diversity of historical perspectives. Concepts and ideas include oral histories, personal stories, chronology, continuity and change, events, people and places, and people and their technological environments.

General Outcomes and Specific Outcomes
The Framework will include General Outcomes and grade by grade Specific Outcomes that will reflect the knowledge and understanding, skills and processes, and attitudes and behaviours that students are expected to achieve through social studies.

Each outcome will be:

- consistent with the vision and organizers
- appropriate to a series of grades (general outcome) or to the grade for which it is intended (specific outcome)
- understandable by educators, students, parents, and community members
- stated in such a way that it will be apparent when the student has met the expectation
- stated in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and processes, or attitudes and behaviours (outcomes may address one or more of the three areas)
- supportive of the use of a range of instructional and assessment strategies as well as the use of a variety of learning resources
- written to begin with the stem "Students will…"
- written using a verb or verb combination and precise, consistent language

General outcomes tend to be long term and broader in scope, while specific outcomes are detailed grade by grade outcomes. General and specific outcomes might address more than one of the organizers.
Distinctive Aboriginal outcomes for social studies may be included in the Framework for students in educational settings that include, but are not limited to the following

- locally-controlled First Nations schools
- Aboriginal-controlled schools in off-reserve or urban settings
- provincial and territorial schools where the majority population is Aboriginal and where the school or school district, and the concerned parents or their representatives have requested that the distinctive outcomes be taught
- where a minority of students are Aboriginal, and the school or school district and parents or their representatives have requested that the distinctive outcomes be taught

Distinctive Francophone outcomes will be designed for students enrolled in Francophone schools or programs within the context of Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These outcomes will support the development of language, identity, culture, and community throughout the framework.

Background: Aboriginal and Francophone Education

A. Aboriginal People

Aboriginal people comprise First Nations, Métis, and Inuit of Canada. Even though each of these groups has different languages, traditions, and histories, there is a similar perspective among all Aboriginal people - a perspective that describes their place, knowledge, and skills in their world. It is vital that teachers, including the Elders of Aboriginal people, transmit this perspective.

Aboriginal people have a unique relationship with the land and their environment, and that relationship is strong and spiritual. Aboriginal people are raised with values and beliefs about the land and therefore believe themselves to be caretakers of the land.

Aboriginal people have ancient legends, songs, and dances that have survived over time. Each nation, clan or group have these traditional arts that reflect their identity and spirituality[1]. Family, group and nation histories are related through the arts, and Aboriginal people strive to become skilled in them and take responsibility to pass them on.

The knowledge of each group has been passed on through oral tradition. The oral tradition is best related in the distinct languages, and is deemed to be the most important way of passing on knowledge. Aboriginal people have high regard for those who teach through oral tradition, and believe it is an essential part of Aboriginal students' education.

Aboriginal histories predate Canadian history by thousands of years. Over this span of time, Aboriginal people developed diverse cultures and self-governing nations, controlled vast territories, and had self-sustaining economies. Their way of life and governance were changed forever upon contact with early explorers.

The basis of Aboriginal people's relationship with Canada is found in the spirit and intent of responsible co-existence, envisaged by the Royal Proclamation of 1763. That relationship continues to be interpreted and negotiated through the treaty-making process, and through the entrenchment of Aboriginal and treaty rights in the Canadian constitution. Aboriginal rights have been further affirmed through the legal concept of Aboriginal title.

Citizenship issues are complex for Aboriginal people. For example, until recently the Indian Act defined and legislated the term "persons" as "anyone other than an Indian." This legislation has never been repealed. In addition, First Nations people were not enfranchised to vote in federal elections until 1962. This right to vote was conditional on being enfranchised by the province or territory of residence.

In the recent past, certain events such as isolating Aboriginal children from their communities led to their loss of traditional skills, values, language, and culture. This

created a people who could no longer identify their place in Canadian society. What had been important to Aboriginal people in the past no longer had validity or importance, either within their communities or within Canada.

Education has contributed to the erosion of Aboriginal cultures and languages. Guided by the voice of Aboriginal people, education can now play a role in the strengthening and revitalization of Aboriginal cultures and languages. Social studies programs based on the Framework will enable Aboriginal students to see their culture and identity presented and supported in a respectful way. This will help them become hopeful and appreciative in lifelong learning, and connected to their culture.

[1] Aboriginal people have a spiritual world view or perspective. They see a world generated by a creative principle that is ever present and always active. This perspective recognizes the total way of life of Aboriginal nations and people, while affirming balance and harmony within the whole environment. The practices associated with this way of life create, support, and maintain one's sense of identity as an Aboriginal person, and as a member of one's family, community, and nation/people. These practices honour the traditions, customs, and symbols Aboriginal people have inherited from their ancestors. A difficulty arises when the Aboriginal concepts of spiritual and spirituality are expressed in English. As English cannot communicate accurately concepts that are articulated in Aboriginal languages, translation to English does not convey the same meaning as it does in the original Aboriginal language. To an Aboriginal language speaker, the terms spirit or spirituality do not refer to worship or religion.

B. Francophone Community and Students *(revised)*

The Francophone Community

The Francophone community is an important contributor to Canadian culture, history and identity. The Francophone community in western and northern Canada seeks to participate fully in Canadian society and believes its continuity affects the course of Canadian history and is of positive value to Canadian society. The Francophone community seeks to be firmly grounded in history, to be modern and dynamic, open to the world, and accessible to all; it is multicultural and multi-ethnic.

The increasing rate of assimilation of Francophone communities in western and northern Canada leads to a sense of cultural ambiguity in Francophones, and represents a loss for Canada generally. Francophone educational programming will help counteract cultural and linguistic assimilation.

Education is the cornerstone of community vitality in Francophone milieux. The Francophone community aims to build excellent Francophone educational programming with an emphasis on the integration of language, identity, culture, and community and to promote the development of leaders and "builders" who are capable of ensuring the continued vitality of the community. The vision of the Francophone community is to develop the student's full potential in order to ensure a high level of academic, personal, social, and cultural success.

A dynamic partnership of school, family, and community is integral to Francophone education and to the development and enhancement of culture, language, and identity. The Francophone community must be a "community of learners" to continue to thrive.

Educational programming must therefore support learning within the home and the community as well as within the school.

The Needs of the Francophone Student

The following describes the nature and needs of the Francophone student in a minority setting. It is expected that social studies, along with other school subjects and with the support of family and community, will contribute to addressing these needs.

The cultural identity of Francophone students is ambiguous on two levels: society and home. Francophone students are immersed in a predominantly English language environment leading to assimilation and at the same time in a Francophone minority that keenly desires to retain its identity and culture. They are also influenced by other cultural groups and by mass culture. At home, where two or more cultures might coexist, children may experience a degree of linguistic or cultural confusion. The degree of *francité*, the degree of linguistic and cultural assimilation, and the level of language development in both languages vary greatly from one student to another.

Francophone students need to build their self-esteem in order to develop a positive cultural identity. They need to feel proud of being Francophone, personally, in their communities, and in their country. They also need to harmonize the diverse elements of their cultural identity.

Francophone students need support from school, family, and community to become a part of an authentic Francophone community. They need to experience *a joie de vivre*, laughter and fun within their Francophone learning environment and community. They need to understand that the community is dependent on them and on their strengths, and that their action or inaction has an effect on the community.

Francophone students need to learn how to be (*savoir être*), how to live together (*savoir vivre ensemble*), how to do (*savoir faire*), and how to act (*savoir agir*) on the personal, cultural, community, and societal levels. They need to understand and assume their rights and responsibilities as Francophone citizens in Canada. Finally, they need to reach a level of bilingualism that enables them to communicate, understand, and conceptualize effectively in both French and English (additive bilingualism).

Social Studies and Francophone Education

Social studies plays an important role in Francophone Education. Along with other school subjects, social studies can help counteract linguistic and cultural erosion, support the continuity and vitality of the Francophone community, and help students reach high levels of academic, personal, social, and cultural achievement.

Social studies can help Francophone students acquire the confidence, knowledge, and necessary skills for integrating into Canadian society and contributing fully to forging this society. Through social studies, students will learn about their Francophone history and heritage and learn how to participate within this culture on the local, provincial, regional, national, and international levels. They will become aware of the role, contribution, and place of Francophones in society in all areas, including politics, science, economics, and the arts.

Social studies can further help realize the full potential of Francophone students by helping students develop and maintain a positive self-image rooted in the beliefs, values, and history that constitute the Francophone heritage.

Perhaps more than any other subject, social studies can bring to the forefront cultural identity and the choice to belong to the Francophone community. It can do this by ensuring that learning takes place in the context of the French language and of an enhanced participation in Francophone culture and community.

In summary, social studies helps students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to act effectively, live freely, and flourish as Francophone Canadian citizens in twenty-first century society.

DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal students	all Aboriginal students (First Nations, Inuit or Métis) in any educational setting, whether in a homogeneous or mixed classrom
additive bilingualism	proficiency in two languages, where the acquisition of a second language does not occur at the expense of proficiency in the first language
The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12	The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12 is the document that will contain the General and Specific Outcomes.
Foundation Document	The Foundation Document provides direction to the developers of the Framework. It presents practical and philosophical considerations for the development of the Framework.
Framework	see The Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies K-12
francité	one's Francophone identity and sense of belonging to the Francophone community
Francophone students	students enrolled in Francophone schools or programs within the context of Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms
French Immersion	see Appendix

APPENDIX B

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Common Interview Questions

1. Please describe your involvement in working with the (WCP social studies) *Foundation Document* (April 1999 draft)?
2. What were some of your initial thoughts on the *Foundation Document*?
3. Tell me about your experiences in the WCP social studies curriculum development process – talk about your participation at a focus group forum?
4. Did the *Foundation Document* or your experiences in the process raise any questions for you?
5. How did you find the language, the use of language, or the discourse of the *Foundation Document*?
6. After reading the *Foundation Document* and/or participating in a focus group forum, did anything surprise you?
7. What did you think about the WCP social studies curriculum development process (was it an open/bottom-up process or a top-down process)?
8. What was left out or not said?
9. Looking back, has anything changed in how you look at the *Foundation Document* or the WCP social studies curriculum development process?

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